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EPHRAIM HOLDING'S
HOMELY HINTS

CHIEFLY ADDRESSED TO

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS

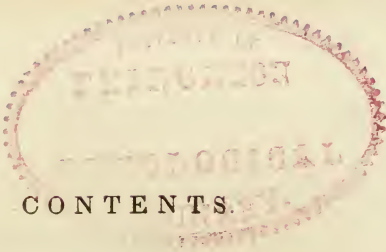
BY OLD HUMPHREY,

AUTHOR OF "OLD HUMPHREY'S OBSERVATIONS;" "ADDRESSES;"
"THOUGHTS FOR THE THOUGHTFUL;" AND
"WALKS IN LONDON."

George Magridge

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EPHRAIM HOLDING'S

H O M E L Y H I N T S .

I.

HOW ARE YOU GOING ABOUT IT?

AND have I lived in the world till my hairs are grey, without picking up a thought that may be useful to a Sunday school teacher? Surely not. Have I nothing to say that will lighten his spirit, encourage his heart, strengthen his hand, quicken his foot, or increase his zeal in the enterprize he has undertaken? Oh, yes, I hope so! If a small seed will produce a large tree, a single feather turn a scale, and a mere spark kindle a conflagration, why should I fear that an old man's words coming warm from his heart, will be altogether worthless?

Putting it down as an axiom, as I do, that no well-meant endeavor to be useful, prudently and zealously persevered in, is ever made altogether in vain, I feel a confidence which is as a cordial to me.

Think not, because time has sprinkled a little snow on my head, that I am weak-minded and peevish ; but rather give me credit for energy and good temper, as well as for sincerity and uprightness of intention. Kindly feelings, one towards another, are of great value ; try then to think as favorably of me as I think of you :—

Though his hair may be scattered and grey,
And the strength of his manhood depart ;
Though the shadows of thought o'er his temples may stray,
Yet affection, and zeal, as he wends on his way,
May be strong in an old man's heart.

Experience, among many other things, has told and taught me this, that in pursuance of the most laudable objects, the mind stands in need of an occasional stimulus ; the affections of the heart require to be excited and called forth. A striking example, a well-timed reproof, a word of encouragement and christian counsel, often impart to us an increased zeal, a doubled diligence, and a new principle of action.

If experience has told me this, most likely it has taught you something of the same kind, young as some of you are in comparison of the years I have numbered. There have been times, perhaps, when going to and attending your classes, you have felt heavy, uninterested, out of spirits, disappointed, and ready to say, " What is the use of my being a Sunday school teacher ?" Now it is just in such moments as these that I want to step in with my humble

hints. When you feel strong; when your school prospers, and your scholars are grateful; when you are listening to some eloquent speech, or reading some talented essay, wherein Sunday school teachers are spoken well of; when the sun shines on your heads and in your hearts, I will trust you for going on perseveringly, and very cheerfully leave you to yourselves; but in the dull, dark, dabbling day, and in the hour of disappointment and despondency, as I said before, willingly would I become your companion, and, in a kindly spirit, offer a few of my homely observations.

There is, I believe, a general impression in society, that youth and age cannot pleasantly keep each other company. Now this appears to me to be a reflection on them both. It seems to say, that young people in their buoyant spirits forget what is due to the more sober and quiet habits of age, and that old people are not sufficiently considerate and forbearing towards their more youthful friends. It would certainly be out of the question for youth to affect the gravity of age, and still more so for age to adopt the light-hearted buoyancy of youth; yet do I feel certain, that young and aged people may mingle together with mutual advantage. You would not, I trust, desire to trespass on the peaceful inclinations of those who are in years; and I would not willingly be a peevish old man, out of temper with the cheerful habits of youth, for all the gold that is to be found in Mexico.

Sunday school teachers, however, are not all young, for though some can hardly be said to be out of their boyhood, others are much farther advanced in years and knowledge, in judgment and christian graces. I hope to say something that will commend me to all, by a cheerful, kindly, and encouraging spirit; approving with readiness, rebuking with tenderness and regret, ever bearing in mind my own abundant infirmities, and endeavoring to manifest that charity that "suffereth long and is kind, that envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, and doth not behave itself unseemly, that seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but in the truth, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, and endureth all things."

Every lover of nature must be struck with the abundant variety that the natural creation presents to the eye and the heart. Spring gives way to summer, and autumn is succeeded by winter. But not the year only, the day and the hour are diversified by grateful changes. The sun is now in the east, by and by in the south, and afterwards sinks in the west. The winds of heaven seldom blow long together from the same quarter, and the beautiful clouds above us are continually forming new and delightful combinations. Hardly shall I be suspected of an affectation of wisdom, in noticing things with which every one is familiar.

But what is the conclusion to be drawn from the

variety in nature? simply this, that change is necessary for the well being of creation. An enduring spring, a continual summer, a perpetual autumn, and a never-ending winter, would be anything but desirable. Neither the vegetable nor the animal world could endure the constant glare of sunshine, or thrive beneath continual shade: the wise, the necessary, the merciful admixture of the one with the other, spreads around a grateful and reviving influence: the trees bud, and blossom, and bear; the flowers expand, the fruits ripen; the bee and the butterfly roam abroad; the bird warbles in the brake, or in the air; man goes forth to his labour, and all creation holds a jubilee of joy.

If it be thus in the natural world, there is something very like it in the intellectual, the moral, and the religious world: there are changes which are necessary, and variety imparts fresh vigour to the faculties of our heads, and the affections of our hearts. Now, I want the homely hints of Ephraim Holding, mingling with the observations of wiser and better men, so far to affect you by their novelty, that you may reap from them the advantage of a change. With this view, it is my intention to lay before you such remarks as may appear to me likely to effect my purpose.

As Sunday school teachers, you are of different ages, dispositions, and attainments; but you are all alike in this—that you have taken on yourselves to communicate instruction to a class of young people

who, but for your kindly aid, might have remained in comparative ignorance. Your primary object is "to give subtilty to the simple;" to instruct young people, so that they may be enabled to read the word of God, and to bring them up in the fear of the Lord. Now this undertaking, lowly as it may be esteemed by some, is a high and honorable enterprise, and the kindly inquiry that I would now make is, *How are you going about it?*

There are bad ways of doing good things, and good things are all the easier performed if set about in a proper spirit and a proper manner, therefore my question is worth a little attention. Your object is good, but *How are you going about it?* Are you asleep or awake? Lukewarm or zealous? Creeping and crawling, or pressing onwards with energy? In a word, are you playing at Sunday school teaching, or are you in real earnest?

I ask not your age, nor what may be your attainments. You may, for years, have pursued your praiseworthy course, or but just entered on your work of usefulness. These things at the present moment weigh nothing with me. A soldier is a soldier, whether in the ranks, or at the head of a regiment. A sailor is a sailor, whether before the mast, or carrying a "red flag at the fore." The question is not, what rank have you attained? but in your station and position, are you doing your duty? Sabbath after sabbath, by your attendance at the Sunday schools, you profess to do good to

the young people you instruct, and to help them on their way to heaven : with this high, this hallowed object before you, *How are you going about it?*

In looking around us in the world we shall find that in most cases, though not in all, success has been theirs, who have been the most determined to attain it. No man ever yet ascended the Pyramids in his sleep, or gained the summit of Mont Blanc by accident. There must be a spirit of determination in every enterprise of difficulty, and my own opinion is, that we are never happier than when overcoming impediments in a good cause. When the motive is equal to the occasion, there is a high-wrought pleasure even in endurance. If in becoming Sunday school teachers, you expected to walk smoothly along a gravel walk, or a bowling green ; that no difficulties would occur, and that week after week you would go on without weariness, difficulty, or disappointment, no doubt you soon discovered your mistake ; but how is it with you now? With the advantage of your past experience, whether it has been long or short, are you as desirous to attain your object as you once were? and *How are you going about it?*

When the boy runs after a butterfly, he is in real earnest, and shows as much determination as though his prize was of inestimable value. When the sportsman follows the game, impediments only increase his ardour, and render him more eager in his pursuit ; hedges and ditches, slips and falls, ac-

cidents and injuries, are of little consequence; the butterfly must be caught, the game must be secured. The man and the boy are in earnest; to attain their trifling end no effort is withheld. Now, if your object is greater, ought your determination and perseverance to be less than theirs?

How are your classes going on? Do things look fresh and green, with a fair promise of a goodly harvest; or is the blade withered, and the ground barren, rude, and bare! Have you done your part manfully, prayerfully, and hopefully? Has the earth been well broken up, or have you spared yourselves in your labour? It is hard to get a good crop from easy ploughing.

“With a straight back at the plough tail,
The weeds will grow and the crop fail!”

When a thing is undertaken from a deep conviction that it is a duty, or a praise-worthy object, from that moment all our energies of body, soul, and spirit, should be pressed into its service. In a case of disappointment, few things are more mortifying than the consciousness that we have brought it on ourselves by our supineness and neglect, and few things more consolatory than the knowledge that we have industriously done our best to secure success.

In teaching others, we have much to learn ourselves; for a proper mode will effect more in one hour, than an improper method will in two. It is

the same in serving others ; for a want of judgment will often destroy an act of intended kindness. The bear in the fable, offers us a striking illustration of this fact. He wished to kill a fly that annoyed a sleeping friend, who had done him many acts of kindness. The intention of the grateful bear was good, but he went about it in an improper manner, for in killing the fly with his paw, he demolished the face of his benefactor. You see, then, that however kind and good your object may be, it is not a useless question to ask, *How are you going about it?*

In my younger days, I delighted in plans of extended benevolence ; but the worst of it was, that they were never realized. My means were not commensurate with my desires. My heart was too haughty, my eyes too lofty, and I meddled with things too high for me. I now see the wisdom, if not of undertaking less, at least of doing more. Individually, we shall never be able to irrigate the sandy deserts of the earth, to clear away its boundless forests, to evangelize the unnumbered heathen, or relieve the manifold miseries of mankind, and it will be all lost time to attempt it ; but we may on a small scale encourage christian benevolence, and render ourselves very useful to those around us.

As plain and homely food is best for the body, so, in general, are plain and practical objects best for the mind. Ephraim Holding has seen a deal of sky-scraping in his time, and has been carried away, perhaps, as often as his neighbours, with the glare

and glitter of imposing spectacles; but when his judgment is brought into healthy exercise, he likes better things, which have less pretence and more utility. He prefers the useful draught-horse dragging the plough, to the war horse in gorgeous trappings, crushing out the life of the fallen foe with his iron hoofs, and losing his own on the pike or the bayonet. He likes better, the evening warbler of the woods, and the lark mingling her song to her Creator, with the balmy breath of morn, than the lonely condor of the Cordillera, whose flight is a "voyage," and the soaring eagle of the Alps, whose wild scream is lost amid the clouds of heaven.

There is nothing romantic, extravagant, or beyond the faculties that the Father of Mercies has bestowed upon you, in your desire of teaching young people on the Sabbath day, and bringing them up in the way in which they should go, with the humble hope, that when they grow old, they will not depart from it; and if the question, *How are you going about it?* be put honestly to yourselves, it will rather assist than retard your enterprise. But what you do, do heartily. While you are a Sunday school teacher, be in earnest; for you will as soon gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles, as obtain satisfaction from duties half performed. If your present object be the glory of the Redeemer, and the good of your young charge, and you pursue it with an humble, patient, peaceful, and persevering spirit, success will attend your endeavors; for if it were

possible for you thereby to benefit none other, you must, of necessity, benefit yourselves.

Though these may be common-place remarks, I despair not of making your hearts glow by some of my future observations; in the mean time, while you pursue your Sabbath enterprise, neglect not altogether my friendly inquiry, *How are you going about it?* for it may call up useful suggestions in your mind. Look upwards as you go onwards in your course of christian benevolence, and fear nothing. Ye shall reap, if ye faint not. Though I cannot ensure you riches and honors while you live, and a marble monument in Westminster Abbey when you die, yet will I promise you the approbation of the wise and good, the delightful peacefulness of an approving conscience, and the true respect and heartfelt prayers of your old friend Ephraim Holding.

II.

DO YOU LEARN WHILE YOU TEACH?

If you could at all enter into the spirit with which I put the question, *Do you learn while you teach?* you would gladly allow me to catechise you with kindness, for I speak to myself while addressing you.

It is an humbling thing to feel ignorant when we have the credit of being wise, and to lack information while we communicate instruction. Alas! how often do I stand in this unpleasant attitude. What would I not give in my age, to have more diligently improved my youthful opportunities of becoming wise?

But thoughts like these are idle now,
And soothe my spirit never;
For time has deeply marked my brow,
And youth has flown for ever!

I have known many people with too little wisdom and useful knowledge, but I never met with one who had too much. Unsuitable knowledge is not useful to its possessor: were a farmer to learn the art of ship-building, and a sailor to study agriculture, it would be throwing time away to attain what would be useless. It is when seeking knowledge and wisdom suited to our situation here and our prospects hereafter, that the injunction of the wise man comes with additional weight, "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." Prov. iv. 7.

On a certain occasion a party lost themselves in a wood, when one of the company undertook to guide them out of it; this he would no doubt have done had he known the way out of it himself, but being equally ignorant with his companions, though more confident, he only involved them in greater

difficulty by leading them farther and farther into the leafy labyrinth.

In another case, the driver of a stage coach being taken ill, one of the passengers, a thoughtless, daring young man, boldly occupied the place of the coachman, but being altogether ignorant of the art of driving, he handled the whip and the reins so awkwardly, that instead of setting down his fellow-travellers at the accustomed inn, he set them down half a dozen miles short of it, by overturning them on the road, breaking the bones of some, bruising others, and terribly alarming them all.

A year or two ago, a holiday party took an excursion up the river Thames, in a boat which had a sail to it, on which occasion they unfortunately committed themselves to the pilotage of one who knew very little about rowing a boat, and still less of the management of a sail. The consequence of this ignorance was, that a sudden gust of wind upset the boat, and several of the party found a watery grave. All these instances plainly declare that the best intentions in the world, without knowledge, are not enough to enable us to attain our ends. The guide in the wood, the driver of the coach, and the pilot of the boat, all intended to act kindly, yet their want of knowledge brought about disappointment, affliction, and death. "If the blind lead the blind," said the Redeemer, "both shall fall into the ditch." Matt. xv. 14.

In the days of my youth, young people had not

the advantages they now possess in obtaining knowledge ; for not only were books of instruction comparatively few and defective, but schoolmasters were, in many cases, very ignorant.

Had my schoolmaster, who kept a village boarding school, been satisfied in giving lessons in reading, writing, and the earlier rules of arithmetic, he might have done justice to those under his care, being thus far, but no farther, very well qualified as an instructor ; but no, he was of too enterprising a spirit to be thus restricted. Vulgar Fractions and Decimals, Algebra, Grammar, History, Geography, Astronomy, the use of the Globes, and Latin, were only a part of that knowledge he fearlessly undertook to communicate.

You will wonder how, with so slender a stock of attainments, he contrived to keep up a reputation for learning and knowledge, for like the schoolmaster in the *Deserted Village*, he was regarded as an oracle.

“ While words of learned length and thundering sound,
Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around !
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew,
How one small head could carry all he knew.”

The way in which he kept up his credit was this : he was quick to discover an error, and woe was the portion of the poor unhappy urchin who committed one. He never attempted to give us information, if we required it, but with a frown sent us back again, that we might obtain it from our

books ; and then he was so fearfully severe, that however apparent his ignorance might be, no one durst call his knowledge in question. Had it not been for the ushers he employed, we should have left school with very little addition to our mental treasury.

Occasionally he used to mount his horse to attend an establishment for young ladies at a distance of some miles, and now and then I accompanied him. As he knew very little, you will readily suppose that I knew still less. Imagine him, then, up to his knees in high-topped boots sitting on his saddle, and I, a boy of ten or a dozen years, straddling his horse behind him, trotting forward on our hopeful enterprize. A pretty pair truly to communicate instruction !

On one of these occasions, my schoolmaster being called away, I had to give a lecture on the globes, and as well might I have attempted a lecture on rope-dancing, being about as much at home on one subject as on the other. To afford any useful information to those around me was altogether out of the question, all that I attempted was to prevent their finding out that I knew no more about the matter than they did.

With this object in view, I told them over and over again, which was the top of the globe and which was the bottom ; explained clearly that the latitude was different from the longitude, and the longitude different from the latitude. I turned the

globe round and round, and allowed them to turn it round too, to gain time, and then I assured them that the world was divided into four parts, and that the four parts and the four quarters were precisely the same thing.

In treating on the celestial globe, I was, if possible, in a still greater difficulty than before, and only kept floundering on from one senseless remark to another. I told them that the odd forms on the globe were not to be seen in the skies, and, that being the case, advised them not to look for them, as it would be all time thrown away. That stars and planets were heavenly bodies, altogether distinct in their character, but I did not venture to explain wherein one differed from another. After mingling together for some time, latitude and longitude, and the signs of the Zodiac, stars, planets, and constellations, in admirable confusion, to my great relief I came to a close ; what my pupils thought of my lecture I never knew ; but for myself, even now, when it occurs to my memory, I could hide my face with both my hands. Perhaps, on the whole, my young friends had no cause to complain, for if I had not made them wise, it was from lack of ability, and not from want of inclination. If I had not communicated to them much knowledge, at any rate I had given them all that I possessed.

Now this was, to say the best of it, a very lamentable piece of business, and my only reason for alluding to it now, is that you may never by want of

knowledge, be placed in so humiliating a situation. Do you feel a desire to be equal to your duties? *Do you learn while you teach?* for unless you do, your power to benefit others will be very limited. A writer, well known for his usefulness among Sunday schools, has said to Sunday school teachers, "You should prepare the lessons for your children before hand. Nothing can be done well without taking pains. You should fear to offer to children that which costs you nothing. You should be like bees continually gathering sweets from every flower to bring home honey to the young swarm in your Sunday school hives. Seek to gain information, and diligently peruse works on education, such as the Teachers' Magazine. Take this as a maxim which I cannot too powerfully enforce: '*He who ceases to learn, soon becomes unfit to teach.*'"

My present object is not to point out to you how you are to learn, or what you are to learn, but rather to increase your desire to gain information. When once you fully resolve to get knowledge, you will find that in this as in other things, "where there is a will there is a way." Learning without a determination to improve, is like winding up a watch with a broken main-spring. A kite will not fly without wind. A balloon will not rise without gas. A hackney coach will not run without horses, neither will you ever become wise without a resolution to improve. "*Do you learn,*" then, "*while you teach?*"

It is said that "men are but children of a larger growth;" and it is certain that the wisest man has very much to acquire. Instead of regarding scholars as learners, and teachers as those who have nothing to attain, I rather look on scholars, teachers, and superintendents, as only different classes in the same Sunday school. All have need to make progress in useful knowledge, and especially to learn lessons of Him who has said, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." Matt. xi. 29.

The question was once asked, "Where shall we find God?" The reply given was, "Where shall we not find Him?" Something like the same observation may be made of knowledge, when once a thirst to obtain it has taken possession of the heart. Ask you where knowledge is to be acquired? "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work." Psa. xix. 1. "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord," Psa. xxxiii. 5; and they who look around with a hearty desire to improve, cannot fail to

"Find tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

The Bible is within the reach of every hand; libraries are abundant, and fresh sources of information are continually being opened around. The difficulty is not in obtaining knowledge, but in making up our minds to become wise.

Every Sunday school teacher may rest satisfied, however limited his experience and humble his qualifications, that if he is in earnest to become useful to his class, he cannot altogether fail in his object, for he will then gladly avail himself of every means to qualify himself for his office. Did Hutton, a poor homeless, moneyless, friendless lad, who was reduced so low as to sleep, for the want of a better bed, on a butcher's block in the open street, did he become a wise man and an eminent writer? Did Ferguson, a poor shepherd boy, without books or instructions lay the foundation of his future knowledge as a famous astronomer? Did Saunderson and Huber, though blind, led on by a thirst of science and a spirit of determination, become eminently wise, the latter as a naturalist, and the former as a professor of mathematics? and shall the lowliest Sunday school teacher, blest with the use of all his faculties, and favoured with facilities, be discouraged in obtaining knowledge? Never! Never! I hold it as an axiom, that he who tied and bound with a sense of his own deficiencies, looks above for heavenly aid, with a heart humble enough to feel his own ignorance, and a spirit ardent enough to pursue after wisdom,

Who pants for knowledge, labouring to be free,
And says, 'I will be wise!' wise he will be.

Again, I ask, "*Do you learn while you teach?*"
For your own comfort, and for the good of your

class, and for the glory of that gracious Redeemer, under whose banner you have enrolled yourselves, this should be the case. One of the most apostolic ministers of the gospel that ever I knew, once addressed me after this fashion: (I was then about five and twenty, and he somewhat more than three-score years and ten :) "How are you in your body, soul, and spirit? Are you humble, and willing to learn as you go on your way to heaven; or, are you proud and puffed up, and think that you know enough already? There is plenty to learn. At least I find it so. If you are not learning, you are cheating yourself of great good, and robbing God of his glory. The more you learn of his word and will, the better you will be able to serve him; the more you learn of his goodness and grace, the better will you love him, and the more gladly will you glorify him. Learn, then, every day, and all day, and never cease learning till you cease living! Learn for yourself! learn for all around you! Learn for life and death; learn for time and eternity." .

As these remarks suited me then, they may possibly suit you now, and should they dispose you to "*learn while you teach*," they may do you even more good than they did me.

St. Paul, the great apostle, though brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, highly educated, learned in languages and full of faith and christian experience,

was a learner all his days. Hear how anxious he is for future attainments:—

“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Phil. iii. 13, 14.

If thus apostles onward press,
For knowledge, faith, and righteousness,
Now doubly prompt should we be found,
To gladly learn of all around.

I have somewhere met with the remark, that the beginning of an address to Sunday scholars should be made to fix their attention, the middle of it to instruct their minds, and the end to impress their hearts; and as I hardly think that a better plan than this can be laid down in addressing Sunday school teachers, I shall endeavour to bear it in my mind. Whether my present Homely Hints will either interest, instruct, or edify, I cannot tell. With a hallowed influence they may do all three. At any rate, I must now bring them to a close, encouraging the hope, that as I myself have often profited by

humble productions, your minds also may be moved to *learn while you teach*, by my common-place observations.

III.

ARE YOUR SCHOLARS GLAD TO SEE YOU?

I DID intend to take for my present heading, the question, "Are you glad to see your scholars?" and in many respects it might have suited my purpose very well; but, on maturer consideration, after pondering the thing in my mind, a more important question occurred to me: instead, therefore, of asking you, Are you glad to see your scholars? I will now inquire, *Are your scholars glad to see you?*"

But do not hastily suppose, if your scholars are glad to see you, that every thing of necessity must be going on well, for that is a consequence which by no means follows. It would be an easy thing to gain the good will of your school by improper means. Were a teacher to load his pockets with apples, oranges, macaroons, and gingerbread-nuts, he would always be a welcome visitor at the school, and his arrival would be hailed with every demonstration of joy; or were he to be imprudently

kind and indulgent in other ways, he might, no doubt, enlist the affections of his young friends ; but all this might be done without conferring upon them one single real and permanent benefit. Outward signs are often deceitful things : the ruddy glow that is the symbol of life in the cheek of health, is frequently in the cheek of disease, the hectic harbinger of approaching death. Before, then, we venture to decide whether the pleasure manifested by your scholars on your arrival be a good sign, we must know on what account it is that they are glad to see you.

But though I thus speak, it does appear to me to be a thing of first rate importance to gain, by proper means, the good will, and if possible, the warm affections of your scholars. It is much easier to hold a boy by his heart than by his ear. Let a boy know that you will not deceive him, and he will trust you—let him know that you are in earnest, and he will not trifle with you—let him know that you are consistent, and he will respect you—let him know that you are not severe, and he will not be afraid of you—and let him know that you are considerate and kind-hearted, and he will love you. Two persons, it is said, once went to a masquerade, the one drest up from head to foot with roses, the other stuck all over with stinging-nettles ; the consequence might easily have been foreseen. Rosyposy was followed wherever he went, every one endeavoring to obtain from him a flower ; while

the whole company fled from Nettletop in the greatest confusion. To apply this to my present purpose, a cheerful and a kind demeanour is a flower that is sure to attract young people; and a reserved, churlish, and severe aspect is a stinging-nettle which is equally certain to drive them away.

I am somewhat afraid that after all the plans and contrivances which ingenuity has devised to render book-learning pleasant to young people, the time never will arrive when it will be any other than a trouble to them. Pretty books, and pictures, and rhymes, and pleasant tales are all very excellent in their way, but we must not be out of temper if children do not find learning quite so entertaining a thing as we wish to make it; a pill is a pill to a child, even though it be rolled in sugar; and a school book is a school book, in spite of the picture in the inside, and the red or blue cover on the out. Admitting this to be the true state of the case, it will be better to hold out inducements to the young mind to overcome a difficulty, than to endeavour to persuade it that a difficulty does not exist. If we cannot say the hill is not steep, we can at any rate speak of the fair prospect which is to be seen from the top of it. Whatever impediments there may be in the path of education, the most likely way to overcome them—to make the crooked straight, and the rough plain, is for the teachers to be on good terms with those they instruct. If a teacher be regarded more as an enemy than a friend, the mole

hill will become a mountain, and the streamlet a rushing river; so that it is no unimportant question that I ask—“*Are your scholars glad to see you?*”

Different kinds of fish are caught with different baits; and nothing can be plainer than the propriety of treating children according to their different dispositions: some are bold and callous, others are timid and susceptible:—one boy will laugh at a reproof that would almost break another’s heart. A knowledge of the character is, therefore, essentially necessary; for, without it time will be wasted, and effort misdirected. I knew a severe schoolmaster, who had so little discrimination, that a boy who *could not*, received the same punishment at his hands as the boy who *would not*; and on one occasion he lightly reprovèd a stubborn scholar, while he caught one, to whom a word would have been sufficient, by the hair of his head, and struck him on the ribs with his clenched fists. Such an instructor might compel obedience, but he was not at all likely to win the good will or the good opinion of his scholars, and whether he was glad or not to see *them*, certain it is that they were never glad to see *him*.

The poet tells us that it is a

“Delightful task, to rear the tender thought,
To teach the young idea how to shoot,
And pour the fresh instruction o’er the mind!”

and so it must be to a fond parent, who has sufficient leisure to attend to the instructions of an affec-

tionate child ; but it is quite another thing to go through the routine of an extended school, to instruct the often-times wayward children of strangers. A high tone of benevolence is required to make such a path appear a path of roses, and perhaps, a still higher sense of duty and christian zeal to persevere therein, when it is found to be a path of thorns.

As it is a mark of wisdom to be humble enough gladly to pick up a useful hint, however lowly may be the source whence it is obtained, so you must not despise the homely hints of Ephraim Holding, even though they be scattered loosely throughout his observations, and at times but slenderly connected with the subject on which he treats. Give, then, a moment's consideration to the following points :—

Amuse your scholars when you can, ever keeping in view their improvement and real good. As a carpenter drives a nail, where he has bored a hole with his gimlet, so should you follow up a cheerful remark with a lesson of instruction.

Aim often at the heart ; better foster one good affection, than impress two good lessons on the memory. A heart is like a house, once get the key of it and take possession, and you may put into it what furniture you please.

Never fail to give encouragement to the tractable and timid. A well timed word will sometimes

work a wonder. "A word fitly spoken, is like apples of gold in pictures of silver," Prov. xxv. 11.

Reprove with kindness, but never with levity; let it be seen that bad conduct afflicts you. "You droll boy, I am very angry with you," will be a bounty for future misconduct. You may as well trifle with the cub of a tiger as with a bad propensity, for when fully grown it will turn again and rend you.

Speak a word now and then, in private, to such of your scholars as you wish to impress; you may do more in the way of correction and encouragement, by this mode, in five minutes, than by an hour's public exhortation.

Draw a wide distinction between a want of talent and a want of attention, and try to make your scholars draw it too. All the reproof in the world will fail to make a feeble boy carry a heavy burden, or a weak intellect accomplish a difficult task.

Often look under your own waistcoat, for it will tell you what is going on under the waistcoat of another. Often consider how you felt and reasoned when a boy; it will tell you what are the feelings and thoughts of the boys under your care, and this knowledge will enable you to act with more comfort to yourself, and advantage to them.

Learn what you can from those below you, as well as from those above you; be not too humble to look up, nor too proud to look down, as you may lose much that you might otherwise attain. When

a boy goes nutting, he *climbs* for the brown clusters, but when he goes mushrooming, he *stoops to the very ground*.

I might go on in this way for an hour, scattering my homely hints for you to pick up or pass by, according to your inclination ; but in walking through the world, we must think of others as well as ourselves. That which may be very pleasant to me, may be very irksome to you. To offer a few points now, and a few another time, may be a much better plan, than that of wearying you with a redundance of advice. I think, however, that some attention to what has fallen from me, will not be time thrown away, as it may render you more serviceable to your scholars, and also make them more glad to see you.

If it so happens that your scholars *are* glad to see you that their countenances brighten up at your approach, that nothing in short can be clearer than the fact that you have won their affections, I would then just suggest that you should put the question to yourselves, How have I contrived to secure their good opinion ? You cannot ask this question honestly, and reply to it truly, without advantage, for the response will either afford you satisfaction, or convince you of an error. If you have secured the love of your scholars, without compromise of a faithful discharge of duty—without losing sight of their intellectual improvement and spiritual welfare, much cause have you for joy ; but if, on the

contrary, you have secured their attachment by imprudent concessions and injudicious kindness, neither really effectually aiding them in the acquirement of useful knowledge, nor earnestly helping them on their way to heaven, reason enough have you for serious reflection. Ephraim Holding has made in his time (to his sorrow be it spoken,) as many mistakes as his neighbours, and as they never imparted to him anything else than vexation and regret, so he feels the more anxious to play the beacon to his friends, warning them away from evil and error.

But what shall I say if your scholars are *not* glad to see you? This is a bad sign truly; for though it is very possible the fault may be on the part of your scholars, it is much more probable that it rests with yourselves. Nay, my advice to you in such a case is, to take it for granted, at once, that the error is your own, and set about its correction in right earnest. So long as a workman loses his time in complaining either of his tools, or of the materials on which he is employed, he makes no progress; but the moment he is determined to do his very best with the one and the other, his eyes become brighter and his work becomes lighter. If your scholars are not glad to see you; something is going on wrong, and the sooner that something is discovered the better. Try yourselves on this point; for as I said before, so I say again, as a general rule, Let a boy know that you will not

deceive him, and he will trust you—let him know that you are in earnest, and he will not trifle with you—let him know that you are consistent, and he will respect you—let him know that you are not severe, and he will not be afraid of you—and let him know that you are considerate and kindhearted, and he will love you.

As you are so much my juniors, you must allow me to point out a common error in young people ; it is this—they have frequently a stronger inclination to enter on duties which do not belong to them, than to discharge thoroughly those which do. I have often run into this error in my younger days—not contented with doing little things, I have been ambitious to effect great ones. In many cases such an error is a great obstacle to usefulness. Think of this, and remember that you are not superintendents, nor ministers, but Sunday school teachers. Assume not undue authority ; enter not on duties appertaining to others, but in an humble, earnest, ardent, prayerful, hopeful spirit, work manfully in your vocation, discharging the commonest duty that devolves upon you with christian cheerfulness. This is the way to obtain your own satisfaction ; this is the way to do good to your scholars, and a very likely way to make them always glad to see you.

I need not be told that Sunday school teachers have their troubles, for who is there that is free from them ! In mind, in body, or in estate, we

are sure to be tried, for "God is too merciful to leave us without trial."

"Whate'er our stations, 'all are men,
 Condemned alike to groan;
 The tender for another's pain
 The unfeeling for his own.'"

I need not be told that the cares of your school are not your only cares, and that, at times, you are unfitted for the efficient discharge of your Sabbath duties. You doubtless have your painful visitations; but an armed man escapes many a wound that unarmed he would receive. Have you put on your armour—your christian panoply?

"The darts of anguish fix not where the seat
 Of suffering hath been thoroughly fortified,
 By acquiescence in the will supreme,
 For time and for eternity:—by faith,
 Faith absolute in God, including hope,
 And the defence that lies in boundless love
 Of his perfections; with habitual dread
 Of aught unworthily conceived, endured
 Impatiently—ill-done, or left undone,
 To the dishonour of his holy name."

Clothed with humility, and clad in christian armour, you may go forwards fearlessly. Look upwards in every difficulty, keep your eyes on the end, and remember you are at work for eternity. When the surrounding bustle of busy man has subsided; when the railroads of the earth, and the balloons of the air, shall be done away; when the fleets of the

sea, the steam carriages of the land, and all the mighty armaments of war shall be no more seen; then will myriads of Sunday School scholars, instructed in righteousness on earth, and brought to know Him, whom to know is life eternal, be assembled around the throne of the High and Holy One. There will they rejoice with joy unspeakable, and there will they be glad to see their teachers. Such a thought is an encouraging one, and strongly contrasts the hollowness of earthly things, compared with those that are heavenly.

“Earthly things

Are but the transient pageants of an hour:
 And earthly pride is like the passing flower
 That springs to fall, and blossoms but to die.”

When a sportsman wishes to do double execution, he puts into his fowling-piece a double charge. I am no sportsman, but there can be no harm in my profiting by his example. Therefore, though I have been hitherto contented with asking you but one of my questions, I will now ask you the two together. *Are you, then, glad to see your scholars?* and *Are your scholars glad to see you?*

IV.

CAN YOU BEAR REPROOF ?

THINK not by my present motto that I am about to reprove you, for nothing is more distant from my thoughts: a homely hint is all that I have for your consideration. You may remember my former remark, "It is an humbling thing to feel ignorant when we have the credit of being wise, and to lack information while we communicate instruction." I might have added, also, that it is an ungracious thing to inflict reproof on others, when we know that we are too impatient to endure it ourselves.

You will not expect me to take it for granted, that all Sunday school teachers are deeply impressed with religious truth, richly endowed with scriptural knowledge, filled with christian zeal, and exemplary in their conduct; no, this I cannot do. If, on the one hand, my judgment and affections lead me to respect you, and to think and speak well of you; on the other hand, reason, reflection, experience, and fidelity, require me to admit that many among you stand in need, aye, and in great need too, of the kind counsels and christian examples of those whose years and experience exceed your own. In this thing I must be honest, though I will take

care neither to be churlish nor unkind. Prepare, then, for my question: *Can you bear reproof?*

When a doctor takes the medicine he prescribes, it is a proof that he really believes it will do his patient good; on this principle it was, that the question about to be put to you, was, half an hour ago, put to myself. You shall have an account of what took place; I will tell you the result of my communing with myself, with all openness and sincerity.

“Hark you,” said I, “Mr. Ephraim Holding, you are about to seat yourself in your easy chair very comfortably, and to put a question to your younger friends, the teachers of Sunday schools; now, if it makes no difference to you, perhaps you will be good enough first to put the question to yourself. Come, let me hear your reply. *Can you bear reproof?* Can you with truth say,—

“Though much I like the smiling look
That cheers me on my way,
Much more I love the just rebuke
That drives my faults away?”

Can you reply, Yes, to this question?”

After much pondering on the matter, I was obliged to confess that I could not. Here, for a moment, the affair seemed to be at an end; but a little farther consideration told me, that my want of ability to reply to the inquiry in a satisfactory manner, was the strongest reason in the world why I should put it to my young friends, lest they, when

they came to have grey hairs, should be found in the same situation. "If I cannot reply, Yes," said I, "to the inquiry, *Can you bear reproof?* the more shame for me, and the greater reason there is that while my young friends are considering the question, I should consider it too."

To speak the truth, it is a trouble to me that I cannot bear reproof so meekly as I could wish: not that I fall into a passion, or give peevish and bitter replies, or even show by my looks that I am displeased, for that would be worse than bad; yet still there is some degree of restlessness, impatience, and quickness of feeling in my heart when I am reproofed. The praise that may do me evil is more welcome than the reproof that may do me good. Now this is not consistent with a hearty desire to receive and profit by the admonitions of my friends.

He that instructs should stand aloof
From selfish love of praise;—
He that reproofs should bear reproof,
And ponder well his ways.

I am the more anxious that you should be able to endure reproof, because some experience with the world has convinced me that this endurance is a very rare quality, and not easily to be attained. There are those who can bear losses and crosses, heavy trials and severe afflictions, summer's heat and winter's cold, better than they can bear reproof: this is, however, no mark of discretion, for "a re-

proof entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool." Prov. xvii. 10. If there are comparatively but few who can bear reproof, we ought, as far as possible, to increase their number.

A Sunday school teacher is a wholesale dealer in reproof, for twenty times a day he has to reprove those who are under his care ; if, therefore, he cannot bear himself what he inflicts on others, he must continually endure his own reproach. Put in practice, then, every virtue and christian grace that you desire to see in those you instruct, for this will be the way to add to your own peace and comfort, and to set them a good example ; let your scholars find in you that which calls forth their respect, and you will be the more likely to benefit them by your instructions.

A few days ago, I stood for some time to observe a long-tailed colt under the care of a jockey. The mettlesome young creature had not been broken in, and he scorned the restraint of the bit and bridle ; he would have his own way, and oh ! what lashes that way cost him. Sometimes he pranced and reared, and at other times he kicked and plunged ; but it was spending his strength in vain, for the jockey had put a strong curb in his mouth, bridling down his proud neck till his snorting nostrils almost touched his breast ; and with a long-thonged whip he lashed him round a circle, till the impatient and distressed animal was so covered with foam and perspiration, that he had not a dry hair on his body.

This very day the young colt passed by with the jockey on his back. That which was difficult to him has become easy; his kicking and plunging is all over, for he obeys the bit and bridle, and walks round the circle, or along the road, with the meekness of a lamb, without receiving a single lash from the jockey. This young colt is a lively image of one wilful in his disposition, before and after he can bear reproof. At first, proud, impatient, restless, and wilful; afterwards, humble, enduring, quiet, and submissive.

Say what you will, it is an excellent thing to be able to bear reproof; may I, then, frankly and freely press on your consideration the propriety of your meekly enduring the reproof of those who are older than you, and who have had more experience: the reproof of your own consciences, which ought never to be disregarded, and the reproof of God's holy word, which should ever be highly estimated. The wise man says, "As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear." Prov. xxv. 12. And the royal Psalmist says, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head." Ps. cxli. 5.

We old men are fond of contrasting the present with the past; and sometimes you would almost gather, from our too partial observations, that we really suppose the grass of the field to have been

much greener, and the sun in the firmament a great deal brighter, when we were young, than they are now: of this, however, I feel very sure, that three-score years ago it was as bad a thing not to be able to bear reproof as it is at this present time.

You may, perhaps, remember that my last address contained the following remark: "I knew a severe schoolmaster who had so little discrimination, that a boy who *could not*, received the same punishment as the boy who *would not*; and on one occasion he lightly reprov'd a stubborn scholar, while he caught one, to whom a word would have been sufficient, by the hair of his head, and struck him on the ribs with his clenched fist:" now the poor culprit here alluded to, was no other than he who is now addressing you; it was Ephraim Holding who received this harsh chastisement at the hands of his severe instructor.

It would have been well for me had I borne with patience this unmerited severity; but, alas! I could not bear reproof: the sparks of anger were kindled in my heart, and my officious schoolfellows, instead of extinguishing them, fanned them into a conflagration. I ran away from school, and thereby, not only afflicted my parents and friends, but also brought on myself a train of evils, much more difficult to endure than the heavy hand of my passionate schoolmaster. Though so many years have passed since this event took place, I feel something very like shame when it occurs to my remembrance.

But it is not just and merited reproof alone that you should be able to endure ; but that, also, which is neither merited nor just. You can hardly expect to pass through the world, without, in many cases, your motives being misunderstood, and your actions being misrepresented. How striking and full of instruction is the exhortation of the apostle, "For what glory, is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently ? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God." 1 Peter ii. 20. And what a beautiful illustration of meekness is offered in the person of the Redeemer, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth ; who when he was reviled, reviled not again ; when he suffered, he threatened not ; but committed himself to Him that judgeth righteously : who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness." 1 Pet. ii. 22—24.

He who is up in arms on every occasion to justify himself, and avenge the slightest trespass on his reputation, "jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel," is like the oak, which, in defying the storm, is torn up by its roots from the ground ; while he who can bear reproof, and meekly endure injuries, resembles the bending willow, that lifts up its head when the tempest has passed by. A little meekness is worth more than a great deal of indignation.

I remember being present in a court of justice, when the magistrate very sharply rebuked a poor man, one of the witnesses in the cause that was being tried; the magistrate was angry, and his remarks were severe and unjust, but the poor man had learnt to bear reproof, and he uttered not a word in reply. Some time after the witnesses had left the court, it became apparent to the magistrate that he had been in error; he immediately recalled the poor man, and thus addressed him: "Witness, I find that you were in the right, and I in the wrong; I was hasty when I spoke to you, and did you an injustice, I am sorry for it, and beg your pardon." There are many who would think that the magistrate condescended too much, and acted unwisely, but I think otherwise; a public injury requires a public reparation. Not willingly would I lower the character of any one in authority; but give me a magistrate who will publicly beg pardon of a poor man whom he has publicly injured.

You see how, in my rambling way, I endeavour to impress your minds with the advantage of being able to bear reproof; but if, instead of my putting to you the question at the head of this address, you can be prevailed on to put it to yourselves, the advantage will be much greater. One word from yourselves will be worth twenty from me. Nothing like communing with your own hearts!

Who ponders books and studies man,
Grows slowly wise by rule;

But he who communes with his heart,
Can never be a fool.

Some years ago, I knew a man who was very passionate, unaccustomed to restraint, and altogether unable to bear reproof. One day, when I was present, he quarrelled with his son, who had all the faults of his father, and told him that he would have no hectoring, domineering blades in his house: this was a reproof that the son could not and would not bear; so, smiting the table with his fist, and declaring that he would not stop at home to be tyrannised over by his father, he angrily left the house, violently closing the door after him.

No sooner had he departed, than his mother began to rebuke her husband, asking him if he was not ashamed to reprove his son so sharply for a fault in which he was outdone by his father? "You know, John," said she, "that I have had ten times more trouble with you and your hasty temper, than you have ever had with your son." Jumping up from his chair, the husband declared that no wife in the world should lecture him; that he would say what he liked, and do what he liked, and fall into a passion when he pleased, without being controlled by her or by anybody. Hateful as this scene was to witness, it was no more than an every day affair, for father, mother, and son, were all unable to bear reproof: from morning to night, discord and disorder prevailed, and one outbreak of anger was quickly succeeded by another.

Now, seeing the ill effects of not being able to control the temper, or to bear reproof in after life, what an important charge is that of the education of children, and how necessary it is that those who undertake it should be thoroughly furnished, to exhibit in spirit, principle and practice, that christian meekness, forbearance, and endurance of reproof, which, with God's grace, they hope to instil into the hearts of those they instruct. Sunday school teachers should be models of meekness, patterns of piety, and abounding always in "every good word and work."

V.

DO YOU STUDY THE HABITS OF YOUNG PEOPLE ?

I THINK it necessary to explain, that in my homely hints, I have not laid down a regular plan, to work out, by systematic steps, some great design. No, my object is a more humble one. I leave to wiser heads than mine, the great business of imparting enlarged and systematic education, while I, from time to time simply take up such a motto as may occur to me, and work it up in the way that appears the most likely to interest and instruct you.

The hints which I throw out at one time, do not of necessity follow those which precede them. Though the address, "Can you bear reproof?" happens to have been written before the present one, it may be read after it without disadvantage.

When soldiers besiege a fortress, they proceed systematically, investing the place, and cutting trenches or ditches, whereby, while they defend themselves from the enemy, they gradually approach the fortress; what is called the first parallel is formed, then the second, and afterwards the third; the covered way is seized, the moat crossed, and possession taken of the works, one after another, till the citadel itself is conquered.

Now all these actions must be performed in regular order; the first must, of necessity, take place before the second, and the second before the third; the place must be invested before the trenches are dug, and the walls must be won before the citadel can be taken. It is the same with education; the rudiments must be mastered before higher attainments can be made. Any attempt to teach a child to read before he could spell, or spell before he had been taught his letters, would be throwing time away; but, as I said before, my simple object does not require me to adopt any systematic arrangement.

The humble hint that I now propose to impart, is the propriety of your paying some attention to the temper and disposition of those you instruct. It

is not enough to see that your scholars are at school in proper time, that their dress is neat, and that their hands and faces are clean: it is not sufficient that you hear them repeat what they have committed to memory, and instruct them to read and spell; for though punctuality, neatness, and an ability to read and recite, are good things, yet are they but the stepping stones to those that are better. If you would do all the good that lies in your power, you must, among other things, study the habits of children, by calling to mind what you remember of yourselves, and observing all you can in the young people around you. A knowledge of the habits of thinking, of the likes and dislikes, and of the prejudices and inclinations of children, will greatly assist you, and strengthen your hands in the benevolent enterprise you have undertaken.

Let us for a moment take a glance at young people, and at those things which are most apparent in their disposition and character, from the child in arms to the school-boy. "The infant in arms makes known its desire for fresh air by restlessness; it cries, for it cannot speak its wants: it is taken abroad, and then it is quiet.

"All children love to go into the open air; they prefer the grass to the footpath, and to wander, instead of walking where they are bidden; 'when,' say they, 'shall we get into the open fields?'

They seek after some new thing, and convert what they find to their own use. A stick placed

between the legs, makes a horse ; a wisp of straw, or a stone drawn along at the end of a string, is a cart. On the sides of banks and in green lanes, they see the daily issues from the great treasury of the earth—opening buds, new flowers, and surprising insects. They come home laden with unheard-of curiosities, wonderful rarities of their new-found world, and tell of their being met by ladies whom they admired, and who spoke to them.”

While these things are going on, a love of imitation is apparent. One does what another does, and desires to have what another has. Boys are much taken up with whips, balls, tops, hoops, and kites ; and girls are equally occupied with dolls, toys, battledores, shuttlecocks, and skipping ropes ; while a love of dress is observable in both. There is a striving in young people to get their own way ; a wilfulness, that, if not watched over and prudently controlled, would bring them into much trouble ; a disinclination to school, and a love of holiday, that is apt to make them inattentive to their learning. Young people prefer playthings to books, and will, when a volume is set before them, dwell on the pictures longer than on the print ; they prefer a fable to the moral at the end of it, and a droll story or marvellous relation to a wise and serious remark. A love of rambling and of seeing sights, especially of natural scenery, is observable ; mountains, rivers, and trees, the rising and

setting sun, and the ever-changing clouds of heaven.

Besides all these things, and a hundred others, they have evil passions at work in their hearts, coveting what others possess, envying such as are better off than themselves, and hating those whom they think have injured them. The more you know of the hearts and dispositions of the children under your care, the more easily will you excite them to good, and deter them from evil.

Now, if you reflect on the matter, you will find that man obtains his ascendancy over the lower creatures of creation, greatly by a knowledge of their nature and habits. He knows that small birds are fond of seed and crumbs of bread; so with crumbs of bread or seed, he decoys them into his snares. He knows that they are frightened at human beings, and at unusual sights and sounds; so, that putting up a scarecrow like a man, and a whirling rattle, he frights them from the gardens and the fields. He knows that the lion is too strong to be struggled with, and the antelope too swift to be overtaken by him; so he attacks them with powder and ball, and thereby subdues them both. He finds out the food that different fishes eat, and, baiting his hooks accordingly, easily takes them from the water.

Without a knowledge of the habits of these creatures, man might use his powers in vain; if he spreads crumbs of bread and seed before the lion,

or baited a hook for the birds, or levelled his gun at the fish in the water, he would meet with little success. I hope that I make myself intelligible to you, and that you see clearly, that if it be necessary to possess a knowledge of the habits of these creatures to enable man to subject them to his purposes, it is equally necessary to be acquainted with the habits and dispositions of children, to be enabled properly to instruct them. I have before said, and now I repeat it again, "nothing can be plainer than the propriety of treating children according to their dispositions. Some are bold and callous, others are timid and susceptible; one boy will laugh at a reproof which would almost break the heart of another."

It is true that as we have all been young, so we all know something of the habits of children; but as every year removes us farther from childhood, giving us new emotions and fresh objects, we are apt to lose sight of what we once knew. Take for instance the childish tales which in earlier days we may have wondered and wept over; they will now neither excite our wonder, nor call forth our tears. Each of us may say of them,

"I hear them told to children still,
But fear numbs not my spirit's chill;
I still see faces pale with dread,
While mine could laugh at what is said;
See tears imagined woes supply,
While mine with real cares are dry.

Where are they gone ? The joys and fears
The links, the life of other years !
I thought they twined around my heart,
So close, that we could never part ;
But reason, like a Winter's day,
Nipped childhood's visions all away,
Nor left behind one withering flower,
To cherish in a lonely hour."

Among all the trifling and absolute childishness that, at times, may be found in mankind, yet with regard to our habits and feelings generally, the apostle's description is strikingly correct : " When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child : but when I became a man, I put away childish things." 1 Cor. xii. 11.

Study, then, the habits of the young ; and reflect when you take a glance at your assembled classes, that the advantages of a virtuous life with heaven in prospect are so infinitely desirable, and the wretchedness of a vicious course ending in eternal woe, so immeasurably fearful, that no pains can be too great to secure for those under your care the one, and to enable them to escape the other. Where evil grows, spare it not ; cast it out root and branch, still remembering that love which worketh most effectually in restraining evil and in doing good : and where you discover the seeds of piety, foster them with care, for with God's help, they shall spring up to be trees in the paradise above.

I want you to think highly of the work you have in hand ; to be in love with it, and to task your powers to the utmost in bringing it to perfection. Sleep not at your post of christian love and duty ; slumber not in directing young pilgrims the way to heaven. Look on your scholars with affection, be diligent in teaching them, study their dispositions, bear with them, be faithful to them, watch over them, pray for them, and fail not to seek for yourselves that Almighty aid and heavenly grace, which can alone enable you to do for them all that you have undertaken.

A few hundred years ago, Rubens, and Raphael, and Michael Angelo were at work with their brushes painting those pictures which now call forth the admiration of the world ; and more than a thousand years have passed by, since Phidias and Praxiteles produced, with their chisels, those beautiful productions of "breathing marble," which have gained them the universal applause of posterity. Rubens, Raphael, and Angelo, Phidias and Praxiteles, considered their works to be important, and all their faculties were taxed to bring them as near as possible to perfection :—they looked with pride to the "immortality of earth and time ;" but your works are intended for heaven and eternity. When the chiselled marble of the sculptor shall have crumbled into dust, and the coloured canvass of the painter "shrunk as a shrivelled scroll" these "little children"—these Sunday scho-

lars of yours, will, we trust, be before the throne of the Eternal, chanting their hosannas, and singing the new song, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

It may be, that these unconnected, but warm-hearted remarks—these humble, but well intended hints of Ephraim Holding, may set you thinking more of the high position you occupy as husbandmen in the vineyard of the Holy One. Oh, that your grapes may appear in goodly clusters, and your vintage prove abundant! What a source of comfort! What a tower of strength to an humble-minded and zealous Sunday school teacher, in the midst of all his difficulties and disappointments, are the words of the Redeemer, "Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

VI.

DO YOU LOOK BACKWARDS AND FORWARDS!

To *turn* back, after having set out on a praiseworthy enterprise, or even to *look* back in doubt, hesitation, and despondency is not a creditable thing to any one.

“ Think well before you pursue it,
But when you begin, go through it,”

is a much better course of proceeding. When, however, I propose the question, “ *Do you look backwards and forwards ?*” in order to induce you to do the one and the other, nothing can be farther from my thought than the desire that, as Sunday school teachers, you should either look backwards with despondency, or forwards with presumption.

There is often so much of profit and encouragement in looking backwards, and so much of hope and grateful anticipation in looking forwards, that I should be sorry for you not to secure the advantages of so prudent a practice. If in gazing on a floweret, you look back to the time when you set the seed in the earth, and forward to the season when you expect it to flourish in all its prime, you greatly add to the amount of your satisfaction. And if in an enterprise of difficulty, you take a glance at the past errors of inexperience, as well as at the future probable success of increased ability to be useful, it will do you good. Whether, then, you regard your youthful scholars as blossoms which are to burst into a fuller bloom, or consider Sunday school teaching as an enterprise of a difficult undertaking, in either case the advantage of looking backwards and forwards will be equally apparent.

By looking backwards, the past will be brought to bear upon the present. All that you have heard, read, or met with, in your experience, will be made

serviceable in your career as a Sunday school teacher. Thus, should you be tried by a wilful and stubborn disposition in a scholar, you may perhaps remember, that on a certain occasion a father, finding he could not prevail on his stubborn-hearted child to go down on his knees, to ask God to forgive him some sin that he had committed—told him, that it would never do for things to remain in that manner, and that, if he would not pray for forgiveness, he (the father) must pray for him. With that, the anxious parent went down on his knees, and prayed so earnestly that the child relented: he burst into tears, and fell down on his knees beside his father. This anecdote is full of instruction, for it tells us, in the plainest language, that there are other modes of conquering a rebellious spirit than those of severity. Are you humble enough, if required, to put them in practice? If you meet with an undutiful or disobedient scholar, it may be that, by looking backwards, you may call to mind the instance which once occurred of a kind mother requesting her thoughtless daughter, who was going on a visit, to be sure to execute some little commission with which she entrusted her. The request was neglected, the mother was taken ill, and before the daughter returned home, she had breathed her last. I am told, that to this day that daughter has not forgiven herself, for neglecting the last request made to her by her affectionate mother. The relation of this circumstance to your class may impress

the minds of some of them, and dispose them, more than before, to honour and be obedient to their parents.

If any of your scholars should be dull and backward through the want of ability, it may be some encouragement to you to call to mind, that a little boy, commonly regarded as an idiot, once applied to be admitted into a Sunday school: deficient as he was in intellect, he made up for it by application and desire for improvement, so that he not only succeeded in obtaining instruction himself, but also was made useful in imparting it to others; living an humble, useful, and consistent life, and dying in peace, in hope, and in joy, nothing doubting, that through the merits of Jesus Christ, he should have an abundant entrance into a world of glory.

Take my advice, my friends, and see if, by looking backwards, you cannot recollect many instances of this sort, that may be made useful to the young people committed to your charge. That which has been of service to one, may be of service to another; and what occurred years ago, may become, as I before said, a blessing at the present hour. A mind well stored with interesting anecdotes of the past, may frequently apply them with advantage, to amuse, interest, instruct, impress, reprove, or encourage those around. The advantage of looking backwards, with the intention of profiting by it in seasons that are to come, is great; but, perhaps, I shall

put this in a plainer point of view by telling you a tale.

Abdallah, the Daring, a cruel and reckless Bedouin of the Desert, whose armed band had despoiled many a caravan of its treasures, and whose very name was terrible, took shelter from a storm in the humble cell of Ben Omar, the Anchorite. Omar was clad in sackcloth, with his head uncovered, but Abdallah wore a dress of the finest linen, while a costly turban glittering with precious stones, the spoil of a plundered merchant, adorned his brow.

The Bedouin robber became thoughtful, for he saw that the hermit Omar was happier than he. The slave of caprice and passion, he neither knew security nor repose—his precious stones glittered on an aching brow, and his costly robes covered a discontented heart.

“Omar,” said Abdallah, “Thou art wise! I can overtake the fleet ostrich; I can overcome the armed caravan, and I know where to find every spring of the desert; tell me where I must look to obtain wisdom?” “*Look backwards and forwards,*” replied Omar, as the robber chief turned the head of his steed towards the sandy wilderness.

Shrill was the wind as it swept the sandy plain, and the storm was yet loud, but the voice of Ben Omar still sounded in the ears of Abdallah: “*Look backwards and forwards,*” were words that were graven on his memory. When he hastened on,

they seemed to pursue him, and when he pitched his tent, they tabernacled in his heart. He looked backwards, and saw youth with injustice, oppression and cruelty—he looked forwards, and saw age with dishonour, remorse, and discontent. The life of a robber had now no charms for him, for Abdallah the Daring was Abdallah the Contrite; by looking *backwards and forwards*, he became humble and wise, the defender of the defenceless, and the friend of mankind.

The benefit of looking backwards is apparent, and the advantage of looking forwards is not less so. The mariner, who sees at a distance the white cliffs of his native land, forgets the storms that have arrested his course; and the benighted traveller who descries the distant light of the hospitable hearth, has already forgotten the dangers of darkness. It is a hundred to one if the farmer would have energy of purpose enough to manure the ground, to break it up with the plough, to tear it asunder with the harrows, and to sow it with grain, if he saw not in prospect the abundant crop, the goodly sheaves, the loaded wagon, and the bulky wheat ricks as the reward of his toil. Neither mariners nor travellers have more reason for encouragement than Sunday-school teachers. Not more surely shall the farmer gather in his harvest, than you shall gather in yours: “Ye shall reap if ye faint not.” Go on, then, in your praiseworthy course, kindly and steadily, hopefully, prayerfully, and per-

severingly, leaving the issue to the Almighty Ruler of all events, with simple dependence on his wisdom, his goodness, and his power.

It may be, that you are much better read than I am in ancient history, and that you know more than I do about the numerous gods worshipped by the Greeks and Romans: but should it be otherwise, you will not object to my introduction of Janus. This heathen deity is represented as having two faces, one looking backwards and the other forwards, to intimate his knowledge of the past and the future. The festival called Agonalia, kept in honour of him, was held in January. Now January has two faces as well as Janus; for it seems at the same time to partake of the winter of the old year, and of the spring of the new year. I do not want you to worship idols, but I have a wish that you should obtain a christian lesson from a heathenish custom, so that, by looking backwards and forwards like Janus and January, thereby increasing your experience and forethought, you may, as faithful husbandmen, train up the young vines under your care, with more profit to them, and with more pleasure to yourselves.

I love to lay hold of any circumstance in common life that helps me to illustrate aught that I may have to describe. A day or two ago, I was talking to a sea captain of the dangers of the deep. "You had need look about you, captain," said I, for you seem to be surrounded with peril." "We

are," said he, "but we keep a sharp look out from the mast head; for when all is right to starboard, all may be wrong to larboard, and when we have no breakers ahead, we may have a privateer astern."

Sunday school teachers have dangers to guard against, as well as advantages to secure, and they ought to keep as sharp a look-out as mariners at sea. Though they have neither breakers nor privateers to contend with, they have other perils. Their scholars may be led away by ill example and deceitful snares; or their heads may be well informed, while their hearts are unimpressed with divine things. Keep a sharp look-out, then. Look backwards and forwards, and intercede with earnestness at the throne of mercy, that your little ones may be led away from temptation, and delivered from all evil.

I have before alluded to the fact, that many persons have acted an important part in the affairs of the world, who in the days of their youth were poor friendless lads that no one cared for, left to struggle on by themselves without a helping hand, or a word of comfort or encouragement. It has often occurred to me, and may have occurred to you, when reading of them, what pleasure it would have been to have fallen in with them, and to have acted a friendly part by them, when they stood in need of a friend. Now, how do you know but that the poorest lad in your Sunday school, aye, and he who has the least to recommend him to your notice,

may in future years become rich, liberal, and useful; and that he may frequently call to mind the kindness of his Sunday school teacher, at a time when he had hardly any other friend. The very thought is enough to stir you up to increased earnestness and kindness, in the service of your Sabbath-day little friends. This suggestion, to look backwards to what has been, and forwards to what may be, must not be neglected. You must put it among the other humble hints of Ephraim Holding. Some of them may be but of little value; but, take them altogether, they may not be without advantage.

I hardly know, whether I use a right term in calling your scholars Sabbath-day little friends, because if you are really interested in their welfare, you will regard them as friends on one day as much as another. The matter is of very little consequence, for whatever I call them, and however you regard them, they are our younger brethren, the heads of future families, heirs of immortality, and candidates for heaven.

If all the kindly thoughts that are felt, and all the grateful words that are spoken, by Sunday school scholars respecting their teachers could be made known, they would no doubt prove an abundant encouragement to their instructors; but this cannot be the case. We must not, however, suppose that these kindly thoughts and grateful expressions do not take place, merely because we hear so little of

them. If experience tells us that we ourselves have ever retained a thankful remembrance of kindness exercised towards us in our earlier days, it is fair to conclude that other hearts are as grateful as our own. Yes! yes! in the midst of the waywardness, the wilfulness, the carelessness, and apparent ingratitude which meet the eye, there no doubt is, in hundreds of instances, a principle of thankfulness at work in the heart, a principle that no future occurrence will altogether destroy. I was once accosted by a young female whom I did not know; in the most grateful manner she reminded me that I had taught her to write when she was a child: and I know one with grey hairs on his head, who is in the habit of relating the fact, that the sum of two pence given to him in a kindly spirit in the days of his boyhood, had made a deeper impression of thankfulness on his memory, than any money transaction which had ever taken place in the course of his life.

But though many motives may influence the minds of Sunday school teachers in giving their instructions, the highest of all motives, the glory of the Redeemer, should take the lead, followed, as next in order, by the desire for the eternal welfare of their tender charge. It is, doubtless, a pleasant thing to call forth the love and thankfulness of those you have benefited; but it is a yet more desirable thing to show your love and gratitude to Him who has so abundantly benefited you. To the Lord of

life and glory you are indebted for every thing you possess here, as well as for every hope you have of an hereafter. Think less, then, of the gratitude you should receive, than of that you should pay—less of what your scholars owe you, than of what you owe the Almighty Giver of every good and perfect gift. If, duly impressed with God's goodness, you look backwards at your past mercies, and forwards to your future inheritance in heaven, you will feel constrained to show your love to the Redeemer, by acts of kindness to the little ones who call upon his name and profess to be his disciples. It is not the greatest act of kindness alone that will be accepted by him, but the least: "Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Matt. x. 42.

You see how I have turned and twined this humble hint of looking backwards and forwards, with the desire of arresting your attention, and impressing your minds: I had some hope when I began of doing it better, but as it is, I have done my best. Try if you cannot improve on my imperfect performance. Your eyes are younger, and no doubt stronger than mine; and if, with God's grace within you, you look sharply about you, perhaps you may see many things that escape an old man's notice. Lose no time, however, for life is uncertain. How arrestingly solemn are the words—

“ Time, like an ever-rolling stream
Bears all its sons away ;
They fly, forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day,

Like flowery fields the nations stand,
Pleased with the morning light :
The flowers beneath the mower’s hand,
Lie withering ere ’tis night.

O God, our hope in ages past,
Our hope for years to come ;
Be thou our guard whilst life shall last,
And our eternal home.”

VII.

ARE YOU PRAYERFUL, HOPEFUL, AND TRUSTFUL ?

IF I could hit upon some contrivance that would at once remove all your difficulties as Sunday school teachers, and so far strengthen your hands, that you might carry on with railroad speed all your plans for the good of your scholars—if I could enable you, at one and the same time, to put all necessary knowledge into their heads, and all desirab’le affections into their hearts, it would be to me a most delightful circumstance ; but this is a state of things neither to be brought about

by the humble hints of Ephraim Holding, nor by the wisdom and benevolence of wiser and better men.

There has no way been yet discovered of building a house, other than that of placing properly one brick or one stone at a time: there has no way at present been devised to make corn grow in any other manner than that of preparing the ground, sowing the seed, and waiting for it to spring up and ripen day by day a little at a time. But even if we could build houses, and make corn grow and ripen at once we should still be as incompetent as ever to make young people good and wise in any other way than that of patiently and perseveringly doing our best to instruct them, and waiting trustfully for the blessing of God on our endeavours. This being the case, let me ask, *Are you prayerful, hopeful, and trustful?*

It is melancholy to think how many deprive themselves of comfort, and rob God of his glory, by neglecting prayer. If prayer be "to the soul what food is to the body," how foolish we must be to deprive ourselves of the nourishment and strength it imparts. If one of you were to refuse his meals he would be thought to be beside himself; why then should he not be judged in the same way when he neglects his prayers?

Depend upon it, my young friends, that a throne of grace is the strong-hold of all who fear God; the ever-flowing and inexhaustible fountain of good

things for time and eternity. If you want peace, love, hope, faith, and joy, seek them where you will, the throne of grace is the only place where you can reasonably hope to find them. You must let me dwell a little on this matter, for your sakes and for my own.

Prayer, in simple language, is, among christian people, the act of asking God, in the Saviour's name, to do that for us which we cannot do for ourselves ; and if we all had a due sense of the value of prayer, in affording us peace, in exciting hope and confidence, and in strengthening our hands and hearts, there would not be found a prayerless person from Kent to Cornwall, from Northumberland to the Isle of Wight. On ! how often do crooked things become straight, and rough places become plain, and things seemingly impossible become easy, after rising from our knees. If you are not prayerful, you may be fit for many avocations, but you are not fit to be a Sunday school teacher.

Think not for a moment that I suppose you either rise in the morning or lie down at night, without prayer, for I think nothing of the sort ; but what I am contending for is a prayerful spirit, whereby you may secure all the advantages of holding communion with God. We may pray, without being prayerful. We may bend our knees, without giving up our hearts to God. Do you remember, in Pilgrim's Progress, how

poor Christian's burden fell from his back when he came to the cross? If you have any burden that prevents your getting forwards as Sunday school teachers, take it to a throne of grace, and, like poor Pilgrim, you are very likely to leave it behind you.

If with prayer you find difficulties in your path, without prayer you will find many more. To begin or to attempt to carry on any measure of importance without imploring God's assistance, is very like saying to the High and Holy One, "I can do without you."

Prayer is a blest employ, that throws
A heavenly balm o'er earthly woes ;
That spreads a peace through every hour,
And clothes the weakest arm with power.

We all of us practise prayer too little ; and I am afraid that, if it were possible to ascertain the truth, it would be found that there are thousands of prayerless people, who, in their several troubles and difficulties, are always seeking help from those who can do little or nothing for them, and never seeking it of God, who can do everything. They who would stand strong on their legs, should often fall down on their knees ; and if you are in earnest in your desire rightly to teach those under your care, you will diligently seek to be taught yourself by a Heavenly Instructor. "Cultivate," says one, "I beseech you, the spirit, and copy the example of

Him, 'who went about doing good.' Commune much with him in his word, spend much of your time at his footstool. So shall you enjoy his smiles, and his holy cause shall prosper in your hands."

Are you hopeful? But I feel almost ashamed to ask the question. Will any one sow seed that he thinks will never spring up? Or set a sapling without expecting it to grow? This would be out of the question; and quite as much so to undertake to teach a class of Sunday scholars without hoping to do them good. Yet still there are different degrees of hopefulness, and I want yours to be of the highest and brightest kind.

You have heard, no doubt, the old adage, "If it were not for hope the heart would break." There is something so encouraging in hopefulness, that we should do all in our power to increase it. The eye of the hopeful is bright; the foot of the hopeful is nimble; the hand of the hopeful is strong; and the heart of the hopeful is animated. If, therefore, you would have a bright eye, a nimble foot, a strong hand, and an animated heart, be hopeful in all you do. Hopefulness is a quality that spreads from one to another. You cannot encourage it in yourself without calling it up in the minds of your young charge. "Let us hope better things." "By and by you will no doubt do better;" and "I will be bound for it, that you will soon make fair progress,"

are hopeful and encouraging expressions which you will do well frequently to make use of.

Be not dependent on the attention or inattention, the good or the bad conduct, of any particular scholar, but rather look at the whole class. Surely among some of them you will find cause for hopefulness and joy. If you love them, bear with them, and go on hoping to the end. Remember your hearts are open to God.

And every thought that passes there,
Your every wish, and every prayer,
Is read distinctly by that Eye,
That pierces through eternity.

Never suppose for one moment, that in doing anything for the glory of God, and the good of his creatures, you are labouring alone; rather take it for granted, as a thing certain as the existence of the sun, moon, and stars, that the presence of the Holy One is with you. He "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed;" He, the Lord of the harvest, will strengthen the weakest of those who labour in his fields and vineyards. Trust in Him confidently, for "he that trusteth in the Lord shall never be confounded."

While I urge on you a trustful spirit, I feel no sympathy with that confidence which springs from conceit, and a high estimate of attainments and ability. On this point let me be understood. It is only on the basis of a christian motive and object, a diligent application of your powers, and an antici-

pation of God's blessing, that you can safely rely. On this foundation you may rest with implicit confidence, and on any other confidence will be misplaced.

I forget the name of the good man, who says, "a little faith in active operation will enable a believer to pass through great troubles," nor do I know whether my quotation is quite correct; but, at all events, we may conclude that faith, which is a believing, relying, trustful state of mind, is as likely to be useful to a Sunday school teacher, as to any one else in the world. There are so many little discouragements in your way, in making your several classes what you would have them be, that it would be well for you to call to mind what mighty things faith has done in the world: but time would fail to tell of "Gedeon and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephtha; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens." Heb. xi. 32—34.

The Holy Scriptures are full of instances setting forth the advantages of faith; and Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Sarah, and Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses, may be remembered among them. Now and then, too, we meet with cases in common

life of a trustful kind, that we ought not to pass by disregarded. One of this description has just reached me ; and as it is suited to my present purpose, it shall here be related.

A married couple, who were in service together a long time in the same family, had, by the frugal carefulness of many years, saved a few hundred pounds. This sum they placed in the hands of their master, who soon after came to ruin, so that, all at once, they were deprived of their situations, and the whole of their property. This was a heavy trial, and the husband gave way to despondency ; but his wife was trustful, and bore up bravely under her afflictions.

A strong man that is faint-hearted is weak, while a weak woman who is trustful is strong. Whatever you do, encourage a confidence in God's goodness,—

A sense of His goodness, forgiveness, and love,
Sheds a sun-beam around us wherever we move ;
Makes the crooked paths straight that occasion our woe,
And breaks off the points of the thorns as we go.

The poor woman encouraged her husband to employ himself as a gardener, while she took in washing, telling him that they should be sure to succeed : but though she was trustful herself, she could not make her husband so ; his heart sank within him ; he became indisposed and took to his bed.

Here was a fresh trouble : but the trustful spirit

is not easily broken ; steady to her purpose, the poor woman set to work, and though her husband was bedridden for years, she supported him through all his sickness, and when he died, buried him, without asking assistance from any one. A short time ago she was herself called away from the world, but not before she had, with her own hands, paid enough to the undertaker to meet the expenses of her funeral ; leaving a striking example how a trustful spirit strengthened a weak woman to endure trials, and overcome difficulties, which broke a strong man's heart.

If, when you read these remarks, you should feel any discouragement in your Sunday school efforts to do good, call to mind the steadiness, the courage, and the trustfulness of the poor woman of whom I have spoken, and be not outdone by her. Be prayerful, be hopeful, and especially be trustful.

Twenty times over have I read that striking exhortation of the Most High to his servant Joshua, when he was about to pass the river Jordan. The following words must have been as oil to his joints, and marrow to his bones : " Arise, go over this Jordan. As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee : I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. Thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee ? Be strong and of a good courage ; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed : for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

We read that Holy Scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness;" and often it is abundantly profitable in consolation and encouragement. What think you, then, of choosing out some encouraging passage in God's holy word, applying it to yourselves with regard to your Sunday school duties; such, for instance, as that in the 41st chapter of Isaiah: "Fear thou not; for I am with thee; be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

A crust of bread and a draught of water revives the strength of the way-worn traveller; and in like manner often a text of scripture refreshes the spirit of a heaven-bound pilgrim. Hoping and trusting as I do that you are not only on your way to the heavenly city, but anxious to help on your scholars in their way there also, so I have ventured to drop the homely hint which I have just given you.

Though among the many whose pens are occasionally employed to instruct and encourage you, there may be a great diversity of manner and matter, yet I trust you will find among them a unity of purpose: they are all anxious to do you good, and to make you more useful as Sunday school teachers. One gives you a history of education; a second a relation of Sunday schools from their commencement; a third points out the best means of cul-

tivating your intellects ; a fourth lays down for you practical rules drawn from experience ; a fifth furnishes you with a list of profitable questions ; a sixth exposes the defects, or enumerates the advantages of Sunday school teaching ; a seventh presents you with interesting reminiscences of Sunday schools ; and Ephraim Holding, taking the humblest path of all, seeks, by his plain and simple mottoes, and his homely hints, to animate you in your philanthropic and christian course. Get good, then, if possible, from all these rills of instruction ; but especially drink deep at the pure fountain of the word of God, with a prayerful, hopeful, and trustful spirit, and you will be made a blessing to your youthful charge.

VIII.

ARE YOU PATIENT AND PERSEVERING?

DID you ever notice an angler, who had been for hours standing or sitting under an old tree in a quiet nook of the brook, without ever so much as catching one fish ? There he stands, and there he will stand by the hour, though he may hardly get so much as a single nibble to afford him encouragement ! There comes on a drizzle, and everything

around him is dark and uncomfortable ; no matter —there he stands. The drizzle turns into a shower, and he is half drenched to the skin ; but neither the drizzle nor the shower drives him from the brook : twice has his hair line been entangled among the stiff reeds and broken ; three times has his hook caught the roots beneath the stream ; and once has his bait been carried off by the finny tribe, to say nothing of his having dropt his fishing-rod, with the spliced-top and bamboo-butt, into the brook ; but these accidents he regards not. The very image of patience, and steady to his purpose, he still keeps his tranquil eye fixed on the soft gliding or rippling waters. It is not, perhaps, till near the close of the day that he succeeds ; then, all at once, his cork-float is drawn suddenly under the surface of the stream, and he pulls out a fish weighing a full pound.

Did you ever stand on a hill ? or under cover of a wood ? or beside a high hedge and deep ditch, when the hunters passed near you, engaged in a fox chase ? You may not have gazed on such a scene, and therefore I will describe it to you.

First comes the fox, drenched with water, dabbled and bespattered with dirt, and almost exhausted. He has run many miles over the meadows and the moor, forced his way through hedges and copses, and swam across rivulets, brooks, and ponds. Close at his heels, with outstretched neck and eager eyes, runs a hound, straining his strength to the utmost.

At a little distance other dogs hold on the hot pursuit, while the distant hills echo back the voice of the hounds, the cheering of the hunters, and the blast of the huntsman's bugle. Horsemen, one after another, appear in sight, urging on their foaming steeds. The spotted hounds; the grey, black, and bay horses; the red-coated hunters, are all plunging forwards. Dogs, steeds, and men seem animated with one spirit; on they go, and on they will go, in spite of accidents and impediments. Here a hound is bemired in a slough—there a horse rolls down a bank, or falls heavily over a broken gate—yonder a rider is thrown! his limbs or his neck may be broken; no matter to the rest! Hark forward! is the cry, and the excited throng plunge on with all the energy of body, soul, and spirit, thrown into the chase. Nothing long together impedes their progress; nothing damps their spirit; nothing draws them aside from the object they have in view; they have made up their minds to be in at the death of the fox, and at the death of the fox in they will be. The first sportsman who comes up, when the game is caught, jumps from his horse, lashes his way through the hounds, and taking out his knife cuts off the tail or brush of the fox, as a trophy of his boldness, his perseverance, and his success.

Ephraim Holding is neither angler nor hunter; but that is no reason why he should not look about him in the world, carefully observing the manners

and customs of those around him, and drawing from them, when he can, an apt illustration or lesson of instruction.

Now look for a moment on the objects which have called forth this enduring patience on the part of the angler, and this untiring perseverance on the part of the hunter, a few hours' sport—a fish weighing a pound, and the tail of a fox! Why the temporal and eternal welfare of only one Sunday scholar is worth more than the sport of years—all the foxes that ever ran on the ground, and all the fish that ever swam in the water. Well may I be excused, then, in urging on you the inquiry—*Are you patient and persevering?* Well, then, may I be allowed to say, be not outdone by the hunter and the angler.

Willingly would I suppose that with the best of all motives you became Sunday school teachers, and that these best of all motives are now urging you on in the conscientious discharge of the duties you have undertaken; but the experience of age, and some knowledge of the human heart, tells me it is much more likely that your motives were mixed with infirmity. Where one of you, with a single eye to God's glory, and the eternal welfare of your scholars, commenced your teaching career, in all probability, ten of you mingled with these motives others of a less praiseworthy kind. Some of you became teachers because you were asked to do so—because others whom you knew were teach-

ers before you—because if you did so, many of your friends would respect you—because you thought that you should like it, or because you considered it to be your duty. But even supposing that love and gratitude for the Redeemer, and unfeigned desire for the spiritual good of your young charge, were the main spring of your actions, it is none the less necessary that you should be warned, and assisted, and encouraged, and urged onwards. Good motives often change their character : they are strong and weak, awake or asleep, as the case may be. At one time they fly like an eagle ; at another they creep like a tortoise. At one time they are all life and animation ; at another they are comparatively dead.

Love often hangs her head, and sings
 A faint and languid lay ;
 And faith and duty droop their wings,
 And loiter on their way.

We all require to be told of things which we already know ; to be reminded of things which we have not forgotten, and, therefore, the hints of Ephraim Holding may not be useless. You may be in the right road, but not going on at the right pace—you may be quick in your plans, and slow in their performance—your zeal may be more striking than your knowledge and judgment ; and you may be diligent without being patient ; and patient without being persevering.

I want the pictures that I have drawn of the

patient angler and the persevering hunter to be impressed on your remembrance: often have I found illustrations of a striking kind useful to myself, and they may be equally so to you. Holy scripture abounds in pictures. Who can look on the following one, without hating sloth? "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man."—Prov. xxiv. 30—34.

Who can gaze on the following portrait of the drunkard, without shrinking at the thought of excess? "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder." Prov. xxiii. 29—30.

As Sunday school teachers you are not very likely to be slothful, and still less likely to indulge in drinking; but these lively sketches that we find

in God's holy word may be useful to us all, in deepening our convictions, and increasing our abhorrence against every sin. These pictures of the slothful man, with his weed-begrown field and vineyard, poverty coming upon him suddenly, and wants springing upon him as an armed man! and of the red-eyed drunkard, wo-be-gone and sorrowful, bitten as with a serpent, and stung as with an adder, are frightful, but they are influential; and youth, manhood, and age, will do well to regard them.

The figures of the angler and the hunter are presented to you, to bring an honest blush into your faces, if, with a glorious object in view, you have so little virtue, courage, patience, and perseverance, as to be outdone by those who have only such a poor poverty-stricken recompence before them. I want to know, that, not as I once said—"when you feel strong; when your school prospers, and your scholars are grateful; when you are listening to some eloquent speech, or reading some talented essay wherein Sunday school teachers are spoken well of; when the sun shines on your heads and in your hearts: but rather in the dull, dark, dabbling day, and in the hour of disappointment and despondency"—I want to know that then, in that dark hour, each of you has sufficient zeal, determination, principle, and piety, to "look upwards and go onwards," and depending on heavenly aid to say, I have engaged myself in

a good cause, and on I will go. I have set my heart on doing good to my class, and with God's help I will succeed! Patience and perseverance will work wonders. *Are you, then, patient, and are you persevering?*

When we see mankind busily engaged in procuring the bits and drops that support them, or the comforts and luxuries of life, we find that among them patience and perseverance are in constant operation. Some traverse the trackless deep, contending with adverse winds, calms, and storms—some make the woods resound with the sturdy strokes of their axes, as the giant trees bow down before them—some till the ground, ploughing and sowing, and gathering in the harvest of their toil—some hunt the chamois on the Alps; the bison on the prairie; and the martin, the fox, and the beaver in the snow-clad wilderness of the north for the skins that cover them—some labour in mines, tearing from the bowels of the earth the various metals that are treasured there—some pursue the wandering whale amid the frowning icebergs of Hudson's or Baffin's bay, or cast their lengthy lines and baited hooks into the deep waters of the ocean—some labour in the crowded factory, the busy mill, or the fiery forge; but enduring patience, and untiring perseverance, are necessary in all to accomplish the objects that are before them. Consider, then, shall the mariner, the woodman, the farmer, the hunter, the miner, the whaler, and the artizan,

all be patient and persevering, and the Sunday school teacher alone flag and despond in the path of duty? Never! never! Your object, your principles, yea, all that is within you, I trust will cry out against such a state of things. You have set your hands to the plough in a glorious field; look not behind you. "Endure hardness as good soldiers of Christ;" and be not ranked with the sons of Ephraim, who "turned back in the day of battle."

How abundant are the lessons of patience and perseverance with which we are surrounded! The industrious ant appears always to be busy, continually and untiringly occupied. The spider diligently weaves his web, and when it is woven, as assiduously watches for his prey. The bee roves from flower to flower, gathering through the live-long day, without intermission, his honied sweets: the bird labours incessantly to build her nest, and then tends with unwearied care her eggs and callow-brood:—so that if you lack patience, and if you are not persevering, the ant beneath your feet, and the bird above your head, the spider in his web, and the bee on the wing, are all monitors to reprove you. A want of patience and perseverance will sink you in your own estimation and in that of others, while it will effectually prevent your being useful, and perhaps spread around the influence of a bad example.

Now reflect a moment on the varied instances of

patience and perseverance that I have laid before you ; they will at least show that the qualities urged on your consideration are common throughout the creation ; and that though we may reasonably expect to attain our objects with them, we cannot reasonably expect to attain our objects without them. Gird up, then, the loins of your minds, and resolve meekly to sustain, and energetically to overcome, the difficulties in your Sunday school path. Do good to your scholars and yourselves, by a diligent attention to your common duties ; and in holy things “ be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.”

I can fancy that I see you on the first day of the month, taking up the Sunday School Teachers' Magazine with its coloured covering and uncut leaves. You give a glance at the cover, and then turn over the leaf to read the table of contents. Here you have encouragement, reminiscences, letters, reviews, intelligence, lectures, plans for teaching, accounts of schools, poetry, or other things as the case may be, and then comes, “ Communications have been received from”—under which head you often find names and initials of those whom you well know, and whom you delight to honor.

After a little dipping here and there into the book, a little picking and choosing, not so much to read the several articles as to know what they are about, and what you have before you to read ; after dotting about from one page to another, at last

comes the inquiry, "What has Ephraim Holding to say, this month? He is rather an odd old gentleman; for he never goes into the real business of Sunday schools, but confines himself to general remarks, hints, and encouraging observations. Whoever he is, there is no doubt that he has a kind heart; but why does he not lay down some express rules for us that would help us along, and our scholars too?"

For this plain reason, my young friends; you have around you christian-hearted and talented men, interested in your success, who know much more than I do of the practical working of Sunday schools, and are much better qualified than I am to furnish you with rules for your guidance. My undertaking and object is simply to supply you with good reasons for patiently discharging your duty, and to call forth your best energies in perseveringly pursuing the benevolent and honourable course in which you are engaged.

I want you, then, to be patient and persevering. One proof of your patience and perseverance I particularly require; it is this, that while you get all the good that is possible from better sources of advice and instruction, you will continue patiently and perseveringly to read, and turn to advantage when you can, the homely hints of your old friend.

IX.

DO YOU ABHOR DECEIT ?

THINK not that I ask this under an impression that you do not disapprove of deceit ! I take it for granted that you must disapprove of it ; but my question is put to ascertain whether your disapproval amounts to an absolute abhorrence of it ? Do you hate it with a perfect hatred ? If you do not, it may be practised under your eye without your perceiving it ; but if you do, you will be quick to discover it in your scholars, and thereby be able, perhaps, to render them an invaluable service, by taking measures for its exposure and its cure.

In the word of God, truth is so highly extolled, and deceit and hypocrisy so deeply reprobated, that I may well be pardoned if, in my desire to quicken your perceptions of deceit, I relate to you some instances of it not connected with Sunday schools. The eye of a Sunday school teacher should be quick to detect deceit and falsehood, and he should be earnest in his endeavour to root it out of the youthful hearts around him.

If we look into the world at large, we shall find that deceit is provided with masks of all complexions, and with clothes of all fashions ; yet, with all

its cunning and all its devices, common honesty is more than a match for it: it is swift, but integrity overtakes it; it is strong, but truth overcomes it. "Bread of deceit is sweet to a man, but afterwards his mouth is filled with gravel." Prov. xx. 17.

In spite of the temporary advantages obtained by crooked ways, it is a truth which cannot be gainsayed, that the hypocrite deceives no one so much as himself. Hour after hour and year after year, he may go on strong in the delusion, that he is overreaching those around him, while all the while he himself is the greatest sufferer from his own deceit. The beggar who ties up his leg to extort charity, robs himself of the honest shilling he might procure by industry, for the discreditable sixpence his deceit and idleness obtain. Take every opportunity of showing your scholars the folly as well as the sin of deceitful ways, and of encouraging them in open-hearted frankness and truth. Never pass over an excuse for late attendance, inattention, or any other error that is founded in falsehood. Let it be known at once that you see through the deceit, and encourage your scholars, by forbearance and kindness, to tell the real cause of their neglect. Uprightness and truth are beautiful things—pearls of inestimable value! wear them constantly in your own bosoms, and recommend them to all who are under your care.

I have known young people who were so accustomed to deceit that they were hardly expected to

act uprightly. There was always something hidden, kept back, or misrepresented by them. What a crooked course did they pursue, and how unlovely were their lives !

I remember a singular case of deceit in a young girl, a mere child, who for several days kept a whole neighbourhood in a constant state of alarm. She had been received into the house where she lived, to render what assistance she could as a servant. One day a pane of glass was fractured in the kitchen window, and soon after this other panes were broken in rapid succession, in a most unaccountable manner, during which time the young girl went about whining and crying as if she were half frightened out of her wits.

A report soon ran abroad of the strange things which were taking place at the house, and a concourse of people assembled, but the breaking of the glass went on as before. Though a sheet was spread all over the outside of the kitchen window, it had no effect in preventing the mischief—down came the jingling glass as fast as ever ; stones fell among the spectators, and hot coals were dashed against the kitchen ceiling. A constable was called in, the neighbourhood was inspected, and people set to watch, but all in vain.

When the young girl went into the cellar at night for coals, brick ends were thrown against the kitchen door ; and when she went up bed, she presently came running down stairs again to say that six or

eight squares of glass had been just broken in the window of her bedroom. For several days these strange occurrences went on, without any one being able to throw a light on the matter.

At length it was observed that the lead of the broken windows was bent outwards, as though the mischief had been done from the inside of the house. A watch was then set inside, and the young girl was seen, while the people, with their backs towards her, gazed at the window, to take coals from the fire, and fling them up against the ceiling. She was directly led off to prison, when the fear of punishment induced her to confess the wicked and deceitful part she had acted.

By way of revenge for some real or supposed unkindness on the part of her mistress, this deceitful girl had determined to do all the mischief she could. She had secreted stones in the house to effect her purpose. She had watched her opportunities when she was not seen, to demolish the windows, and to spread confusion around. She had crept through the cellar window at night to throw brick ends at the door ; and she had broken the attic windows with a stone bottle, afterwards running down stairs apparently affrighted at the destruction that was taking place.

This poor girl was very ignorant ; she had not had not the benefit of a Sunday school education. Think, then, for a moment, of the position you occupy. If by your care and kind attention to the

Sabbath duties undertaken by you, one young person can be kept from such a wicked and deceitful course as that I have described, your time will not be lost, your patience and perseverance will not have been in vain. Set the highest example before yourselves and your scholars, even the Saviour of sinners, for he had no guile in him, "neither was any deceit in his mouth."

Among the different kinds of deceit and imposture which prevail, that of affecting to be afflicted with disease is so fearful an impiety, that one might wonder how it is that he who counterfeits lameness, or rolls the balls of his eyes to affect blindness, is not afraid of the lightning flash of divine wrath as a punishment for his presumption and hypocrisy.

I am about to describe a case of this kind to which I was an eye-witness some years ago, when spending a week or two at a farmhouse in Hertfordshire. While sitting with a few friends in the parlour, a lady, one of the visitors, came in, and requested me to see a servant who had just called in, said to be afflicted with St. Vitus's dance.

Now among the manifold infirmitates to which human beings are subject in this world of sin and sorrow, the disease commonly called St. Vitus's dance is by no means the lightest. Often times the patient is affected with continual twitches and contortions that are distressing even to witness.

Well, as I said, the lady requested me to see the servant, assigning as a reason that she strongly sus-

pected her to be an impostor. Now, thinking that the poor girl, if she were really afflicted, had quite enough to endure, without any addition in the way of unjust accusation, I endeavoured to excuse myself; but the lady was urgent, and strengthened her case of suspicion by relating so many little subterfuges on the part of the girl, that, at last, I undertook the case, determined to act with caution and kindness. The servant had left at least half a dozen places of service on account of her affliction, so that for a long time she lived without work, on a weekly sum allowed her by the parish.

I found her to be a stout and apparently healthy young woman, only that her right hand was in violent and continual motion. After asking her a few general questions, I took hold of her hand, endeavouring to keep it quiet, when, in a moment, the action was transferred to the elbow. This called forth my suspicions. I then, holding her wrist with my left hand, grasped the arm above the elbow with my right, when directly an evident effort was made to move the joint of the shoulder. Had a doubt then remained on my mind as to her being an impostor, it was soon removed by the girl herself, for, finding the movement of her arm arrested, she, forgetting herself, made a half movement with the other hand to set herself at liberty.

Though fully convinced that she was a deceiver, I kept my discovery to myself, and asked her if ever she had been bled? With some degree of

alarm, she replied "No!" and said that the parish doctor thought it not proper. Her alarm at the thought of being bled was not lost upon me: I had now made two important discoveries; the one that she was a deceiver, the other that she had a fear of the operation of bleeding.

A little insight into character gives us great advantage in going through the world, and I found it to be so in the occurrence I am relating. "Young woman," said I, "your case is a bad one, but I hope and trust it is not beyond remedy. Then, turning to the lady of the house, I requested her instantly to remove the patient into a back room, and to lose no time in procuring a wash-hand basin, linen rag, and bandages. With consternation in her face, the young woman retired.

Possibly you may think that I acted a somewhat hard-hearted if not a dangerous part. It is true that I doubted not the girl believed me to be a doctor, and I took no pains to undeceive her; it is true also, that serious consequences have often occurred from sudden fright; but then remember, the sin she was committing was a sad one; it had been practised for years, and called aloud for exposure; and I had full opportunity to exercise my judgment as to the effects which her fear had upon her.

Proceeding to the back parlour, I found all things in readiness; the servant girl was standing with her hand in motion as before. Binding up the arm

of my pale-faced patient, and placing it over the wash-hand bason, I took out my pen-knife, not having a lancet, and held it so that she could only see the point of it. I then looked in her face to read, if I could, what was passing in her mind.

Unhappy girl! She had spread her net of deceit, and had fallen into her own toils! What poor creatures we are when we lose the support of an upright intention and a good conscience! What miserable boggling and shuffling we are compelled to resort to, when we try to pass off wrong for right, and evil for good.

Just as I had pointed to the full vein in the poor girl's arm, I gave a start, and then, hastily putting my fingers on her pulse, observed it appeared to me that the attack was about to subside, and that I would on no account have recourse to bleeding if it could be avoided. Recommending the young woman to keep herself quiet for ten minutes to see whether the symptoms would not abate, and again expressing my great objection to bleed her unless it should be absolutely necessary, I left the room.

Before the ten minutes had expired, I received private intelligence that a very great improvement had taken place in my patient; that the violent action of her arm had much abated, and that, in short, there was every prospect of a complete cure.

When I again made my appearance, hardly could I preserve my gravity, for the young woman scarcely moved her arm. There was, setting aside the wick-

edness of deceit, something so truly ludicrous in the gentle risings and fallings of that arm, which was before so violent, that my slender stock of philosophy was almost overcome; however I did contrive to preserve my gravity.

Once more I applied my fingers to the pulse, looked wise, and asked a few unmeaning questions, after which I made a few remarks on the sudden changes which characterised some complaints, and concluded my observations by saying that I could not rest satisfied till every symptom had subsided; so long as the slightest motion was visible in the affected limb, I should be apprehensive of a return of the attack.

Again I left my patient for a short time, and on my return found the cure was complete. Not a finger, not a muscle moved. St. Vitus's dance, for the time at least, was completely eradicated; so, binding up her arm in her apron, I directed her to support it with her other hand, and to walk home as gently as she could.

The windows of the farm-house parlour, which overlooked the road from the house, were crowded with all the visitors, as the recovered patient crept like a snail down the avenue to the white gate, carrying her wrapt-up arm carefully with her left hand, thinking, no doubt, how well she had contrived to deceive the doctor.

I had now done all that had been required of me; I had tried the delinquent, and proved her guilty of

deceit. The disease of St. Vitus's dance was all an imposture. It then remained for them whom it most concerned to take such steps as would effectually prevent my unhappy patient from ever again profiting by her hypocrisy. How true it is that "the way of transgressors is hard;" that "the folly of fools is deceit;" and that "the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment." For a season this unhappy girl had succeeded in living a life of idleness, obtaining pay from the parish on account of her supposed infirmity; but how dearly in the loss of her character would she have to pay for the imposture.

The aged tenant of the farmhouse lies in the churchyard, and part of the visitors slumber in the tomb; yet here am I still, mercifully preserved, penning down this poor record of bygone days.

Had this poor ignorant girl received the advantages of a Sunday school education, and been faithfully dealt with by her instructors, it is hardly probable that she would have persevered in so hypocritical and hardened a career. Look around you, then, and see if among your scholars there is one in whose heart this error, this vice, this sin is taking root. It is a good thing for you to accustom yourselves to discover the germs of evil, the beginnings of sin in your young charge, and then to look at these things in their full growth; remembering that sin, though small as the mustard seed of Scripture, which you know is described as the least of all seeds,

grows rapidly, and may become as the wide-spreading tree, which delves deep with its roots, and extends its gigantic branches afar.

My object in these remarks has been to quicken your perceptions in the discovery of deceit in your scholars, that you may, with God's blessing, be made a means to defend them from the evil of their own hearts. The best way to do this will be in a prayerful spirit to keep a watchful eye over your own hearts, and to say in sincerity, "Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart." Psalm xxvi. 2.

X.

DO YOU TURN PASSING OCCURRENCES TO ADVANTAGE?

As in my present hints I mean to be practical, so, perhaps, there is the fairer prospect of my being useful. After all the plans and contrivances which have been laid down for Sunday school teaching, the common routine of your accustomed duties is, perhaps, the most important. There can be no doubt that especial advantages are obtained by addresses, striking remarks, visits of talented and christian-minded strangers, the introduction of new, interesting, and

profitable books, and by private conversation with your scholars ; still, I do not think that these advantages are altogether equal in importance to those which are secured by a punctual, patient, and persevering attention to your common routine of instruction. When I first learnt to write with my school companions, some of us were very fond of flourishing with our pens ; “ I have no objection,” said our tutor to us one day, when we were thus employed, “ I have no objection to your learning to flourish, but first attend to your writing ; secure a good, plain, intelligible hand, and then flourish as much as you please.” You perceive that the homely hint I here mean to give you is this ; benefit your scholars by every means in your power, but, above all, by a punctual, patient, and persevering attention to your common routine of Sabbath instruction. If you do no more than teach them to read God’s holy word, and impress their minds with the value of prayer and holy things, you will be to them real friends, and kind benefactors.

But though I thus speak of your common duties as, under God’s blessing, the most to be relied on, and the most important, yet would I strongly advocate the spirit, the talent, and the practice of turning to advantage passing occurrences. The Sunday school teacher who can avail himself readily of the little incidents which are continually taking place in every situation, may do much good to those under his care by his apt remarks : he will spread cheer-

fulness around ; lighten labour ; win the good will of his scholars, and increase his influence among them.

Now, let me give a few instances of what I mean, by way of illustration : it will be odd, indeed, if out of a dozen homely hints, you should not be able to pick out two or three which may be worth remembering. Old Ephraim Holding is surely not so hardly driven to it, as to be utterly unable to throw out a useful suggestion to his young friends.

If a scholar come to school early, let him not suppose that you are unmindful of the circumstance, but rather encourage him with a cheering remark, after the following fashion : " This is something like ! A good beginning is the way to a good ending. Give me the boy with a willing mind ; one that comes to school by the rail-road, and not by the broad-wheeled wagon. They tell me that early cherries have been sold at a guinea a pound in Covent-garden market, and you may buy late cherries there at two-pence."

If a scholar come late. " How is this ? A quarter behind time ! Never let it happen again ; my time is worth as much as your's, and I have quite as much to do away from the school as you have, and yet I am here before you. Had I given notice that a plum cake would have been divided among the early comers, you would have been here half-an-hour ago ; and yet your Sabbath instruction, with God's blessing, will be worth more to you than

all the plum-cakes in the world. Now do not come again with heavy heels, take all the lead out of your shoes, and see if instead of coming a quarter after time, you cannot get here a quarter before."

When the sun shines. " You see, boys, the sun is doing his duty, now let us do ours. If it would be a shame to sit in idleness by the light of twenty candles, it would be a sin as well as a shame to waste the light of the sun, that millions of candles could not outshine !"

On a dark day. " If we cannot see the sun to-day, it is a great comfort that we can see our books. The people at the Blind Asylum, who have no eye-sight, are as busy as bees on a week-day ; let us, then, who have eye-sight, be as busy as bees on the Sabbath."

On a sharp frost. " This is a cold day ; but he who sends us the sunshine, sends us the frost ; and if the one is intended to do good, so is the other. The people in some countries have frost and snow almost all the year. Now, if they can bear so much pinching, I warrant we can bear a little. If there were no frost, there would be no ice, and if you had no ice, you would have no sliding. Think of this, boys, and none of you screw up your faces, but all of you bear the cold without a murmur."

On a hot day. " If we were in the East or West Indies, or in an African desert, with no tree to afford us a shade, we should have some cause to complain of the heat ; but as it is, we must try to make

ourselves easy. So long as we wish fruit to be brought to maturity, and corn to ripen for the sickle, every hot day should fill our hearts with thankfulness and joy."

When it rains. "It comes down now, however! It would be a hard task to count the drops of rain, but a much harder one to count God's mercies. In some parts of the world they have no rain for years together, and in other parts it keeps on raining month after month incessantly. Whenever it rains we should thank God for two things; the one, that we have rain enough; the other, that we have not too much."

After a clap of thunder. "If God were always to speak to us in thunder, it would indeed terrify us. How thankful then should we be for the gentle whisperings of his Holy Word! Every thunderstorm should make us value our Bibles more than ever."

On beginning school. "Now, boys, to business, to business! A Sunday school is like a flower-garden: the books are the flowers, and the scholars are the bees. That is the best bee that gets the most honey, and he is the best boy who gets the most wisdom."

When the clock strikes, for sometimes it is larded aloud from some church tower in the neighbourhood of a Sunday school. "Do you hear the clock, boys? It tells us two things; the one, that we are living; the other, that we are dying, for

time is hastening on. The striking of a clock should make us thankful for life, and remind us to prepare for death.

To a diligent scholar. "A little wisdom in the head, is worth more than a great deal of money in the pocket; and your diligent habits will do you more good than a gold mine. Only continue as you are going on now, and we shall some day be glad to turn the scholar into a teacher."

To the scholars when about to return home. "Now boys, forget not at home what you have learned at school. I remember many years ago two parties quarrelling; the one was determined to build a wall which was wanted, and the other was equally determined that the wall should not be built; so every day a portion of the wall was built by the one party, and every night it was pulled down by the other. Now mind, boys, that you do not act so foolish a part. Mind that you do not pull down during the week the wall we have built together at the Sunday school on the Sabbath."

These instances are merely given, as I said, by way of illustration; they are homely hints which you may turn to advantage, by improving upon them as occasion may serve. You have heard many such sayings as these. "Time and tide wait for no man." "An opportunity lost is never to be regained." "If you lose the ship, you lose the voyage;" and, "A minute too late is too late for ever." Now all these are meant to set forth the

wisdom of taking advantage of occasions and opportunities. It is wise to do this through life ; it is wise to do it at home and abroad ; and it is wise to do it at the Sunday school.

But when I ask, if you turn passing occurrences to advantage, I wish not to confine the inquiry altogether to the hours you pass at the Sunday school. It is on the Sabbath day that you take on yourselves the office of instructors ; but every day you may do something to render yourselves more capable in the discharge of your duty. If with an eye to your Sabbath engagements, you look around you during the week, for something that might be useful to you at your school on a Sunday, you will hardly fail to find it. Everything that adds to your knowledge, and improves your character ; everything that increases your interest in the welfare of young people ; deepens your convictions of the hatefulness of sin, imparts an additional value to God's Holy Word, and heightens your desire for the Redeemer's glory, is an advantage. There is as much difference between the teaching of one who is in love with his vocation, and the teaching of another who is influenced by inferior motives, as there is between a real fire and a painted flame. The one is warm glowing, and grateful ; the other is cold and cheerless.

Do not undervalue my hint of laying up on a week-day what may be useful on a Sunday. For several years I was accustomed to spend a few

hours, on a certain day of the week with one who was much confined within doors. Invalids are cut off from many enjoyments, and the call of a friend, and the narration of any passing occurrence of interest is often a great gratification to them. Well, I used to store my memory through the week, as well as I could, with such profitable remarks and interesting particulars as came within my reach, so that when the day came round, I had a well supplied budget of welcome intelligence. This became a sure source of mutual gratification; and I question much whether my poor invalided friend received more pleasure in hearing, than I did in narrating the several particulars I had collected together. Try to profit by my experience; and what I did for my invalided friend, do you for your Sunday school.

It has been said that you may walk abroad the whole year without once seeing a pin lying on the ground, but that if you go out with the intention of picking up a pin, you will be sure to find one; if this be a truth, and I am quite inclined to believe it is, there is no reason why it should not be applied to a useful lesson for young people, as well as to a pin. Make it a business to look for something that may be made useful to your scholars, and there is very little doubt but you will find it.

If you see a sun-rise, or a sun-set, or a moonlight scene, that impresses your mind with the greatness

or beauty of God's glorious creation; or a text of Scripture which exhibits in a striking light the grace of the Redeemer, say to yourself, 'I will mention this at the Sunday school, it has impressed me, it may impress others; if it has called forth gratitude in my heart, it may make the hearts of my Sunday scholars thankful.' This custom, persevered in, will become pleasant to you, and pleasant and profitable to those under your care.

If, in the course of your reading, you meet with anything that will point out the temptations and dangers that young people are subject to, let it not be forgotten. A short time ago, I read an account of a person engaged in the post-office, who was tempted to secrete a letter which he thought had money in it; being suspected, he was examined, and the letter found in his possession. For stealing of that letter, which after all contained only a penny-piece, he was transported for life! Think of a human being losing his character, his liberty, and his peace, and all for a penny! It is true that he thought the letter contained more than a penny; but it shows what poor wages the author of evil gives to those who obey him. When you meet with such an account as this, fail not to take it with you to the Sunday school: it may open the eyes of some of your class to the sin and folly of dishonesty, and impress their minds deeply and solemnly with the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal."

Experience teaches us the wisdom of sowing the

seeds of instruction, admonition, and encouragement freely, for we know not what part of them will spring up, and what part of them die. Certain it is that young people often remember what we do not suppose has made a lodgment in their minds, and forget what we take the most pains to impress on their memory. The habit of sowing freely is the most likely to secure a good harvest.

When a boy is put apprentice to a business, of whatever kind it is, though he may be altogether ignorant of it at first, he acquires afterwards a degree of expertness: and if it be so with the apprentice-boy, why should not it be so with you? If you make it *your business* to consider how you can best serve your classes at the Sunday school, take my word for it, you will hit upon methods and find out means which at first never occurred to you.

When I fall back on my experience, and consider how many of the words and deeds of those who acted kindly to me in my boyish days are treasured in my memory, it operates as an encouragement to pay attention to young people; and willingly would I turn every passing occurrence to their advantage, not even losing my present opportunity of impressing you with the propriety of doing the same thing. Not yet have I forgotten the days of my youth; not yet have I ceased to feel a lively interest in the welfare of young people; and so long as Ephraim Holding truly desires that the world may increase in knowledge, kindness, goodness, and the fear of

the Lord, so long must he respect and honour Sunday school teachers, for their christian labours on behalf of the rising generation.

XI.

WHAT IS YOUR STOCK OF INFORMATION?

ALTHOUGH of all necessary qualifications in a Sunday school teacher the sincere desire to benefit his scholars in time and eternity is the most necessary, yet would I, again and again, urge on you the importance of attaining knowledge.

It is true that, with a goodly sincerity of purpose, much good may be done, with only knowledge enough to keep a little a-head of your several classes, but an increase of attainments is such an increase of power, that the question, "*What is your stock of information?*" may be made useful. So many circumstances take place, and so many occasions present themselves, in which the possession of knowledge will strengthen your hands, and increase your influence, that, from day to day, and from hour to hour, you should diligently add to your mental stores.

It is not to know things merely, that is desirable, but to be so familiar with them, as to be able to

apply your knowledge promptly and practically, as the case may require. This familiarity with knowledge I will venture to press a little more on your attention.

Your knowledge of God's word, I trust, is considerable; you know, most likely, the general contents of every book it contains, from Genesis to Revelation, and are familiar with Scripture characters.

You know that the word Scripture signifies writing; that the Holy Scriptures comprehend the Old and New Testaments, written by holy men, inspired by the Holy Ghost. That the Scriptures are called The Bible, or The Book, by way of pre-eminence, as it far excels every other book; that the Old Testament is the "dispensation of the covenants of grace by types and shadows," representing "the coming of the Messiah;" and that the New Testament, or the Gospel, is "the new dispensation of the covenant of grace," showing the Messiah to be come.

You know that the history of the Bible is the most ancient of any in the world—that it contains an account of the creation—the sin of our first parents—the promise of a Messiah or Redeemer—the general depravity of mankind—the flood—the building of Babel, and the scattering of the inhabitants of the earth—the Egyptians and their plagues—the idolatrous nations—the wanderings of the children of Israel in the desert, and the signs and

wonders wrought there for them—the Ten Commandments and the laws—the bringing the people into the land of Canaan ; together with a full narration concerning the patriarchs and the prophets, the priests and the kings.

The New Testament, you know, treats of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ ; his birth, life, teaching, miracles, cruel death, and glorious resurrection, with an account of John the Baptist, his forerunner, and his followers, the Apostles, with their testimony to the truth of the Gospel. I give you credit for the knowledge of these things, but are you as familiar with them as you ought to be ? if not, make up your mind to become so.

You are aware, most likely, that the first age of the world extends from Adam to Noah ; the second, from Noah to Abram ; the third, from Abram to Moses ; the fourth, from Moses to David ; the fifth, from David to Nehemiah ; the sixth, from Nehemiah to John the Baptist, and the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ ; and the seventh onward to the period when St. John wrote his Gospel. If these ages are fixed in your memory, they will afford you great assistance in your meditations on the past.

You know that, from a very early age, idolatry has been widely spread abroad ; and probably you know that the Egyptians worshipped Osiris, Isis, and Typhon ; the Persians, Ormuzd, Mithas, and

Ahriman ; the Hindoos, Brahma, Seeva, and Vishnu ; the Babylonians bowed down to Belus ; the Syrians, Canaanites, and Philistines, to Moloch, Baal, Dagon, and Rimmon ; the Peruvians, to the sun, moon, and stars ; and the Mexicans, to Vitzliputzli and Kaloc ; the Scythians adored Tabite, Papius, and Apia ; the Scandinavians, Odin, Frea, and Thor ; the Celts, whose priests were Druids, Teutates, Dis, and Andate ; and that the Greeks and Romans worshipped Jupiter, Neptune, Mercury, Apollo, Mars, Vulcan, Juno, Minerva, and others. Though these are but a small part of the gods of the heathen, they are some of the principal among them. Though you may know these facts generally, your occasionally reading them over will refresh your memory, and, perhaps, make you more thankful for your knowledge of the true God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

You may know that the history of the English Bible includes a period of nine hundred years, and I may be stating nothing new to you in recapitulating the following facts ; the venerable Bede translated the Psalter and the Gospel into the Anglo-Saxon by order of King Alfred. The price of a Bible, in 1274, fairly written, with a Commentary, was £30., though in 1240, two arches of London Bridge were built for £25.

Richard Rolles was one of the first to attempt a translation of the Bible into the English language.

as it was spoken after the Conquest. He wrote a paraphrase in verse on the book of Job, and a gloss upon the Psalter ; but the whole Bible by Wickliffe appeared between 1360 and 1380.

A bill in the year 1390 was brought into the House of Lords to forbid the use of English Bibles, but it did not pass. A decree of Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1408 forbade unauthorised persons to translate any text of Holy Scripture into English, as well as prohibited the reading of any translation till approved of by the bishops or a council. Several persons were burned for reading the word of God.

In the reign of Henry the Fifth, a law was passed, "That whoever should read the Scriptures in their mother-tongue, should forfeit land, cattle, body, life, and goods, from their heirs for ever, and be condemned for heretics to God, enemies to the crown, and most errant traitors to the land." And between 1461 and 1483, Fust, or Faustus, who undertook the sales of Bibles at Paris, where printing was then unknown, narrowly escaped punishment. He was taken for a magician, because he produced them so rapidly, and because one copy was so much like another.

The Latin Vulgate, printed at Mayntz, in 1462, was the very first printed edition of the whole Bible in any language, bearing the date and place of its execution, and the name of the printer. The first printed edition of the Holy Scriptures in any mo-

dern language was in German, in the year 1467. The New Testament, by Luther, revised by Melancthon, appeared in 1522. William Tyndal, in 1526, printed his English Testament at Antwerp; but those who sold it in England, were condemned by Sir Thomas More, the Lord Chancellor, to ride with their faces to the horses' tails, with papers on their heads, and to throw back their books into the fire at Cheapside. Tyndal himself was strangled and burned. His dying prayer was "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." John Fry, or Fryth, and William Roye, who assisted Tyndal in his Bible, were both burnt for heresy.

Cranmer obtained a commission from the king to prepare, with the assistance of learned men, a translation of the Bible. It was to be printed at Paris, but the Inquisition interfered, and 2,500 copies were seized and condemned to the flames. Some of these, however, being through avarice sold for waste paper by the officer who superintended the burning, were recovered, and brought to England, to the great delight of Cranmer, who, on receiving some copies, said that it gave him more joy than if he had received two thousand pounds. It was commanded that a Bible should be deposited in every parish church, to be read by all who pleased; and permission at last was obtained to all subjects to purchase the English Bible for the use of themselves and families.

In the year 1535, Coverdale's folio Bible was

published. In the reign of Edward the Sixth, new editions appeared. In Mary's reign, the gossellers, or reformers, fled abroad ; but a new translation of the New Testament in English, appeared at Geneva in 1557, the first which had the distinction of verses, with figures attached to them.

A quarto edition of the whole Bible was printed at Geneva, in 1560, by Rowland Harte. A New Testament, in Welsh, appeared in 1569 ; the whole Bible in 1588, and the English translation called the Bishop's Bible, by Archbishop Parker, in 1568. It was in 1582 that the Roman Catholic Rhenish Testament appeared ; and in 1609 and 1610, that their Douay Old Testament was printed. In 1607 was begun, and in 1611 was completed, a new and more correct translation, being the present authorised version of the Holy Scriptures, by forty-seven learned persons (fifty-four were appointed) chosen from the two Universities. This edition has been truly styled "not only the glory of the rich, and the inheritance of the poor," but "the guide to the way-worn pilgrim, the messenger of grace, and the means of knowledge, holiness, and joy to millions." Perhaps all of these facts are well known to you, and they may have made you value the word of God more highly than you did before you knew them : yet still memory is defective ; read them again and again, for you cannot be too familiar with them.

You are not, I dare say, without some know-

ledge of creation at large. You know that the sun is the centre of our system, around which the earth and other planets move; that it is a million times larger than the earth, and at a distance from it of more than ninety-five million miles; that the moon, which gives us light, is itself lighted by the sun; and that the stars are suns themselves; that clouds are vapours; that winds are air, put in motion by heat and cold; that snow is frozen vapour; hail, frozen rain; and rain, small drops of vapour, united by cold air into larger drops, which the atmosphere cannot sustain.

You know that the earth is about twenty-four thousand miles round it, or eight thousand miles through it; that its surface is formed of land and water; that it is now usually divided into six parts; Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australasia, and Polynesia; that its productions are animal, vegetable, and mineral, and that its inhabitants are supposed to be about a thousand millions, varying in colour, language, religion, manners, customs, and opinions. You may know these things well, but if not, try to make yourselves familiar with them.

The history of your own country is perhaps known to you, at least you are not altogether ignorant of it. You know that eighteen hundred years ago, England was inhabited by heathen barbarians; that it was conquered at different times by the Romans, Saxons, Danes, and Normans; that William the Conqueror built the Tower of London; that his

son, William Rufus, was accidentally killed by an arrow; that Henry the First was called Beauclerc, on account of his learning; and that when Stephen reigned, England was troubled with civil wars.

You know that Henry the Second conquered Ireland; that Richard the First, called Lion's-heart, engaged in the crusade, to take possession of Palestine, or the Holy Land; that King John was compelled to sign Magna Charta, the bulwark of English liberty; that Henry the Third reigned nearly fifty-six years; and that Edward the First, when Prince of Wales, would have died from the wound of a poisoned arrow, had not Eleanor, his wife, sucked out the venom from the part.

You know that Edward the Second, a weak prince, was murdered at Berkeley Castle; that Edward the Third was crowned at fourteen years of age; that Richard the Second quelled the rebellion led on by Wat Tyler and Jack Straw, by placing himself at the head of the insurgents; that Henry the Fourth, to his disgrace, was the first to burn men on the charge of heresy; that Henry the Fifth obtained great victories in France; and that Wickliffe, the father of the English Reformation, lived in his reign.

You know that Henry the Sixth succeeded his father, when only nine months old; in his reign took place the rebellion, headed by Jack Cade; that Edward the Fourth was brave, but cruel also; in his reign printing was first introduced into England;

that Edward the Fifth was a boy, and reigned only two months, being, it is said, murdered with his brother, in the Tower; and that Richard the Third waded through slaughter to a throne, though many evil deeds are laid to his charge, which he is now supposed to have been free from.

You know, that in the reign of Henry the Seventh, the Cape of Good Hope, America, and the East and West Indies were discovered; that Henry the Eighth, though a strong-minded monarch, lived a life of selfishness and cruelty; in his reign, the reformation in religion was begun on the continent, by Martin Luther; and the Bible, being translated and printed in English, was ordered to be set up in churches. You know that Edward the Sixth, a very young king, was pious, mild, and merciful; when a companion wished him to set his foot on a large Bible to enable him to reach a shelf above him, he reprov'd him, saying, that he ought not to trample that under his feet, which he ought to treasure up in his head and his heart.

You are aware that Queen Mary was a bigoted Roman Catholic, in whose reign between two and three hundred people were burned on account of their religion; among them were Cranmer, Ridley, Latimer, Hooper, and Ferrar; that Elizabeth restored the Protestant religion; in her reign the Spanish armada was destroyed: that in the reign of James the First, the Gunpowder-plot, to blow up the Parliament-house, was formed and discovered;

that Charles the First was beheaded at Whitehall ; that Oliver Cromwell ruled as Protector for nine years ; that Charles the Second was an abandoned libertine ; and that the pestilence which carried off more than sixty-eight thousand persons, and the great fire of London, that destroyed thirteen thousand houses, occurred in his reign.

You remember that James the Second fled from his throne, which was ascended by William the Third ; the changes in the government, called the Revolution, took place in his time, and the Bank of England was established ; that Anne was much beloved ; in her time was brought about the Union between England and Scotland ; and that George the First laid it down as a maxim, " Never to abandon his friends, to do justice to all the world, and to fear no man."

You know, that in the reign of George the Second, the British Musuem was established ; that George the Third reigned near sixty years ; one of his wishes was, that a Bible might be possessed by every one in his dominions ; in his reign Sunday schools were established in England ; that in the time of George the Fourth, great discoveries were made, Sunday schools multiplied, and religious publications widely spread abroad and at home ; that the Reform Bill was passed in the reign of William the Fourth, and the Act for the Abolition of Slavery in the British possessions ; and I need not remind you that Queen Victoria now sits on the

British throne. May she long reign in the hearts of her subjects, and, after that wear a heavenly crown.

In this manner I might go on a long time running over the heads of information, quite as well known to many of you as to myself; but, perhaps, I have said enough, and what I wish is, to impress your minds with the great advantage of obtaining a stock of useful information, and being familiar with what you know. When the English learner of a foreign language has obtained a fair knowledge of it, but not such a familiarity as to enable him to express therein his thoughts, or to comprehend what a speaker of it says without difficulty, he takes so much time to consider when spoken to, that he loses the opportunity of reply, and just so it is with all who are not familiar with the knowledge they possess. It is of little use to know things by halves. Be determined to know all you can, and also to know it well, and you will find abundant opportunities to turn it to advantage.

XII.

ARE YOU FOND OF CHILDREN?

WHEN a nurse-girl applies for a situation, this question among others is almost sure to be put to her—"Are you fond of children?" and almost as sure is this answer to be returned, "yes, ma'am," or, "very, ma'am," or "I always was, ma'am." Without being unreasonably severe upon the poor girl, experience proves that this reply is sometimes an improper one, being prompted rather by her supposed interest than her real inclination.

But in putting the inquiry to you, there is no reason at all why you should not give an answer strictly in accordance with truth: for, in the first place, your interest will not be affected by your reply; and, in the second, if it were, that reply will not be given to me, but to yourselves. Let me therefore urge on you the propriety of paying some attention to my question, as I mean to explain to you my motive in proposing it.

Believing, as I do, that we may foster bad passions, and good emotions, just as we may feed a viper or a dove, so it is important that we should be aware of this circumstance, that we may not on the one hand nourish what is bad within us, and that

we may on the other encourage within us all that is kind, and useful, and virtuous, and good. If you have not in your hearts a fondness for young people, I want to excite it within you; and, if you have, I would willingly increase it, and turn it to a good account.

To put the question to you—Are you fond of young people? appears to imply a greater doubt than I really entertain in this matter, for I can hardly suppose that you are not fond of them, seeing that you devote so much time for their express benefit; but still, as many from a sense of duty perform acts which inclination does not prompt them to discharge, I will, for a moment, suppose the possibility that your sympathies are not much excited; that your affections are not much called forth by the society of young people. Let me then, under these supposed circumstances, speak a word or two in their behalf.

You are now, for the most part, comparatively young yourselves; but believe me, should your lives, by God's blessing, be prolonged, you will find in the world so much planning, contriving, and scheming; so much underhand dealing and overreaching; in short, so much selfishness and suspicion, that you will find it a relief to fall back upon the simplicity, the frankness, the open-heartedness, and unsuspecting disposition of young people. Youth has a thousand faults, but they are the faults of the moment, and you seldom find among the thou-

sand a deliberate determination to seek an advantage at your expense. How often, when my heart has been aching at the cold, suspicious, calculating selfishness of maturity, have I gazed on the open brow, the unsuspecting simplicity, and confiding faith, visible in the countenance of childhood, with an emotion of admiration and affection. In such seasons I could have snatched the little lovely ones before me to my arms.

Oh, there is much in childhood that we ought to love; much in the guileless spirit of children that we ought to practise in riper years: for my own part, I love such scenes as call forth my affections towards young people, either in their infancy or their youth. I love the old ballad of "The Children in the Wood," though there may not be a word of truth in the whole story. How affectingly the pretty babes are set forth, wandering hand-in-hand in their forlorn condition,—

"Their pretty lips with blackberries
Were all besmeared and dyed;
And when they saw the darksome night,
They sat them down and cried."

"No burial this pretty pair
Of any man receives,
Till Robin Redbreast painfully
Did cover them with leaves."

There is a sweet piece of poetry by Mrs. Opie, called "The Orphan Boy;" and a still sweeter piece by the poet Wordsworth, under the title "We

are Seven." You, perhaps, know them both. In the former, we are led to pity a poor, little, unprotected boy ; and, in the latter, to admire the simplicity of a cottage girl, who cannot be persuaded that because she has a brother and sister in heaven, they are not, still, a part of the cottage family. I read this latter piece with the same emotion with which I read it in my youth, and it makes my heart yearn towards the dear little prattler, who will have her way, and who will not consent to be robbed of her brother and sister.

There is a painting, by Sir Joshua Reynolds, I believe, or Sir Thomas Lawrence, I forget which, of the child Samuel at prayer. If you have not seen it, very likely you have met with a print of it in the shop windows ; a sweet pretty picture it is. Little Samuel is kneeling in his night clothes, with his hands raised in supplication, a beam from above falling full on his head ; I have a copy of it framed and glazed, hanging up at the present time in my bed-room, and often do I look upon it with pleasure. Moses in the bull-rushes, too, is a favourite subject with most of us, and I frequently call it to my remembrance. The danger of the poor babe endears him to us, and though we are aware that his own mother is not far off, and that his own sister is watching over him, we seem hardly to be satisfied without watching over him ourselves. Now if I, by dwelling upon such scenes as these, or any other of a like kind, which I may happen

to meet, keep my affections alive towards young people, let not the hint be lost upon you. The same thing may be done by you with the same advantage.

Surely if you do not love children, a little consideration on their helplessness, simplicity, open-heartedness, and teachableness will move your affections; and if you do love them, it will make you love them better than before. Had not our Saviour loved them he would not have said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God."

But now let me take it for granted that you do love children, and that you are both willing and anxious to do them all the good you can by instructing them zealously, bearing with them patiently, reproofing them kindly, and encouraging them cheerfully. You have not forgotten the proof required of Peter of his love for his Lord and Master. "Feed my lambs," and as you profess to love the same Lord, offer him then, the same proof of your sincerity.

Perhaps one way of attaching you more to your scholars, and making you think less of the inattention and bad behaviour you may at times meet with from them, may be this,—to bear in mind how much worse other scholars have behaved than yours, and how much more other Sunday school teachers have to endure and overcome than the

comparatively little difficulties you have had to encounter.

Think of the attempts which have been made at various times to educate, on the Sabbath, the thoughtless and wicked children of thoughtless and wicked parents. You may have scholars who absent themselves from school on trifling accounts, but you never hear of their being at the police station, confined in Newgate, or labouring at the tread-mill. Though this is not the case with your scholars, it has been the case with others.

You may have met with a scholar who has not behaved to you respectfully, but hardly have you, I think, ever been laughed and grinned at to your face. Hardly have you seen a scholar throw his heels over his head in school, to raise a laugh among his playmates; nor is it likely, when you have directed a boy to follow you, that he has done so walking along the school on his hands, with his heels in the air, instead of walking on his feet. Though this has never occurred at your schools, it has occurred elsewhere.

Occasional noises may be indulged in by some of the careless scholars, whom you have to instruct; but it is not probable that in the season of prayer and praise they have ever whistled and screamed, and catcalled one to another to break up the school, singing indecent songs, and tumbling the forms over on the floor; but if these things have not

taken place among your boys, other school-boys have had recourse to them.

Not yet, I suppose, have you ever had scholars so full of deceit, as to pretend, though they could read, they knew not a letter, and that merely to give you trouble, and laugh at you for being so easily deceived. You have not, I dare say, had for scholars known thieves, who had no homes but the shelter afforded by carts, sheds, and pig-sties, and no employment but stealing ; nor can I conceive it a probable case that you have a scholar who has attempted to take away the life of another ; but though you have never had such reprobates to instruct, other Sunday school teachers have. While you reflect, then, on the thoughtless depravity of such young people as I have described, and on the trying and painful situation of their kind instructors, think less of your difficulties, think better of your scholars, love them, and double your wonted diligence in doing them good.

While trying to love them, fail not to try also to make them love you, and to act with habitual kindness one towards another. A spirit of discernment is necessary when dealing with young people, to enable us to know when to commend and when to reprove ; for their apparent kindness to one another, sometimes, springs from a bad motive, while, at others, their very errors arise from good affections. I have known boys act kindly to others, simply that they might prevail on them afterwards to do things

that were evil, or that they might obtain some end of their own ; and I have also known boys to do improper things from the real kindness of their hearts. As an instance of the latter sort, a school-boy whom I knew, out of gratitude to one who had helped him in his lessons, absolutely stole from a neighbouring garden some fine Orlean plumbs to present them to his friend. A sad proof that kindness of heart, as well as unkindness, may manifest itself in a very improper manner.

I will relate here a story that I have met with, which places in a clear point of view the possibility of good affections and kind intentions, when not regulated by prudence and controlled by principle, leading to the commission of crime.

It happened, says the story, that a gentleman had an unusual abundance of fine grapes in his hothouse, and his gardener boasted far and near, that such grapes were not to be had in the country. This information soon reached the ears of a numerous gang of gipsies, who had encamped on the skirt of the common hard by.

The gipsies had boiled their evening pot suspended from three sticks ; they had supped, played on the fiddle, and retired to rest, some under the tent, some stretched at full length under an old oak tree, and some lay round the cart by the side of their donkeys.

The old mother gipsy was very ill, indeed it was thought she was at the point of death, but that did

not restrain the rest of the gang from following out their reckless pursuits and light-hearted mirth. For some time the old woman could eat nothing that the gang could bring her, at last she cried out for grapes.

At dead of night, when the stars were visible in the sky, and all was silent around, a stout young man gently stole away from the encampment, passed down the dark lane, and tearing a stake from the hedge, proceeded on his way to the gentleman's garden. The wall was high, but he soon clambered over it; in another minute or two he had found his way to the glass door of the hot-house.

No sooner had the young gipsy placed his stake under the door, and wrenched it open, than a wire fastened to it, set a large bell at the top of the hot-house ringing; turning round hastily to make his escape, he was confronted by two men who at that moment, from different directions, arrived at the spot. Accustomed to danger, he lost not his self-possession, but resolutely attacked them, when a blow from one of them dashed him back against the glass door; in a moment, however, he again grappled with his opponents, and all three struggled for their lives.

The ringing bell, and the jingling glass, soon brought half a dozen servants to the scene of contention, when the light of a lantern discovered to them three men throttling each other on the ground.

The servants dragged them asunder, and led them away, one by one, to different places of security for the night ; but what was the surprise of the culprits in the morning to find, when placed together, with their hands tied behind them, that they all belonged to the same gang. The old father gipsy had resolved, cost what it would, to get a few bunches of the best grapes in the country for his dying wife ; and his two sons, unknown to him and to each other, had also formed the same resolution for the sake of their dying mother.

It was a daring enterprise, and one that, under common circumstances, would have been visited with great severity ; but so pleased was the gentleman with the attachment of the gipsies to their aged and dying relative, that, after inquiring into the truth of their statement, and giving them suitable reproof, in which he pointed out how much better it would have been to have made known to him the object they had in view, than to break the laws of God and man, he pardoned their crime in admiration of their affection, sending them away laden with the best grapes his hot-house would afford.

If you have ever met with temptations, and trials, and difficulties, in obtaining what knowledge you possess, forget not that your scholars are exposed to the same temptations and trials, and that many of your difficulties with regard to the acquirement of knowledge, they have to surmount ; this should call forth your sympathy in their be-

half, and bind you to them with an affectionate interest in their welfare ; and if you have met with forbearance and encouragement, and kindness, then are you doubly called upon to exercise these qualities to those you teach. I hope you are fond of children ; I hope you are fond of Sunday scholars ; and I hope that you are especially fond of those who are under your care.

Whenever we are disposed to "provoke one another to love and to good works," we never need stand still a single moment for a motive ; for we are under such immeasurable obligations to the Father of mercies for all his goodness to us, and especially for the gift of his Son, that every faculty of body, soul, and spirit, should be at all times ready to be employed in the acknowledgement of what we owe. "Ye know," says the apostle, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." 2 Cor. viii. 9. Think it not, then, too much to do your utmost for your scholars, for many of them may be numbered here among the disciples of the Redeemer, and be welcomed hereafter as heirs of the kingdom of heaven.

XIII.

CAN YOU MAKE SACRIFICES ?

It is a much easier thing to give a useful hint to one with whose age, habits, and circumstances we are acquainted, than it is to offer suitable suggestions to many, whose ages, habits, and circumstances are various. In the first case, we aim as it were with a rifle ; in the last, we fire as with a scattering blunderbuss. When I take up my pen to address Sunday school teachers, I usually say to myself, many are addressed by me, but I can hardly hope to benefit more than a few.

I hope that in the midst of your Sunday school occupations, while setting the machinery of your classes in motion, and attending to its details, I hope that you continue to ask yourselves what is the prevailing motive that Sunday after Sunday carries you through your duties ? Oh, it is a glorious thing to have a good and benevolent motive in a good and benevolent cause.

If ever travelling on horseback when your poor jaded beast could hardly make a trot of it, you have baited him at the road side inn, giving him a draught of water and a half-peck or at least a full quarter, of good sound oats with a few beans in it— if you have ever done this, you must have remarked

how amazingly the strength and courage of the animal has been increased by the corn within him : talk of trotting ! why, he would have trotted, cantered, or galloped with you at once, just which you would, without whip or spur, for his spirit was equal to anything. As corn to the horse, so is a motive to the man. With a good motive in vigorous operation in your hearts, you will be equal to pursue your object through fire and water.

Among the many questions that I have asked you, the inquiry, *Can you make sacrifices ?* has not, I think, yet been made. It is true, that, to a certain extent, your very taking on yourselves the office of Sunday school teachers is an answer to my question ; for every Sabbath day you are making a sacrifice, in giving time to others which might be devoted more especially to your own advantage or gratification ; yet still it is very possible, that a Sunday school teacher may be somewhat backward to make sacrifices. Self-denial is a christian virtue too excellent to be disregarded ; and self-denial cannot be practised without making a sacrifice.

As I have said before, every good quality you get into your hearts will enable you the better to instruct your scholars. If you possess self-denial, and can make sacrifices, you will the more easily practise punctuality, patience, forbearance, and perseverance. What you do will not be done grudgingly : what time and attention you bestow, will be given willingly ; and in these offerings, as well

as in those of silver and gold, " God loveth a cheerful giver."

When I think of a Sunday school teacher, I love to give him credit for every warm-hearted affection and christian grace ; to picture him out not only doing his duty, but doing it with alacrity ; undismayed by difficulties ; unsubdued by disappointment, winning his way through unexpected obstacles, and running with diligence the race that is set before him, ready to make sacrifices, and to endure hardness as a good soldier fighting manfully in the good cause in which he is enlisted. Such an one will fling around and propagate his own good qualities, and there will be in his class a reality, a life, and a spirit, which otherwise will be looked for in vain.

I have been casting about for the most striking instance on record, of men being willing to make sacrifices, for the good of their fellow men. England is famed for many virtues, but it is not among English people that I have found it. Though the instance to which I allude may be known to many of you, it is not likely to be known to all ; I will, therefore, venture to relate it.

About five hundred years ago, Edward, then king of England, besieged Calais ; when the French inhabitants being shut up by land and water, were put to such great straits, that they wrote to Philip their monarch to say, that they had " eaten their horses, their dogs, and all the unclean animals they

could find, and nothing remained but to eat each other."

Though things had come to such a pass there was no relief afforded them ; so that Sir John of Vienne, the captain of Calais, went to the walls of the town, and there spoke to Sir Walter, of Manny, telling him, that in the fulfilment of their duty they had stood out until they were in extremity, but that they were then ready to give up the place, on condition of being permitted to depart in safety. This was refused, for the English king, being enraged by the mischief done by the people of Calais, and the expense to which he had been put by them, resolved to compel them to surrender, that he might put to death as many as he pleased, and ransom as many as he pleased. At last, however, he so far relented as to say, that on condition of six of the principal burgesses of the town coming out bare-headed, bare-footed, bare-legged, and in their shirts, with halters about their necks, and the keys of the town and castle in their hands, to be dealt with after his pleasure, the rest should find mercy.

These were hard conditions, for how was it to be expected that six rich citizens would offer up their lives for the rest ; nevertheless, six such were to be found. Eustace de St. Pierre was the first to come forward, declaring his trust in the Lord God, and his willingness to jeopardize his life. Whether or not a monument was erected to commemorate this generous and patriotic action I cannot tell, but I am

sure there ought to have been one in Parian marble. Jehan D'Aire was the next, and he was followed by Jaques de Wisant, and Peter his brother, and two others, and these six notable burgesses, for the love they bare to their country and the city wherein they dwelt, went out of the gates to the English party, bare-headed, bare-footed, and bare-legged, in their shirts, and with halters round their necks, to save the lives of the men, women, and children of Calais. The English earls and barons wept for pity at the sight of them ; but the king ordered their heads to be struck off. Sir Walter, of Manny, sued for them in God's name ; but the king would not hear him, calling out for the hangman ; at last, the queen herself kneeled down to intercede for them, and then king Edward gave way, and spared their lives.

I know not how this matter affects you, but for myself I feel an unbounded sympathy and respect for these men. When a man talks about serving his country by plunging into battle, be he in the ranks, or at the head of an army, he has something beside the love of his country to animate his courage : he hopes to escape without injury ; and then there is the glory, and the prize-money he desires to obtain ; but these men, with the instruments of death ready round their necks, gave themselves up to their enemies to sacrifice their lives, for the welfare of their fellow men.

Now I want this relation to be a means of calling

up within you a willingness, yea, a desire, to make sacrifices : I could blush for my own demerits in this respect. How long have I lived in the world, and how few, how very few, have been my sacrifices, compared with the abundant mercies of which I have partaken. Why should we be outdone by Frenchmen in making sacrifices ?

Some years ago, Napoleon Buonaparte, who was then Emperor of the French, invaded Russia, with a great army. Ambition is never satisfied ; and if Napoleon had conquered Russia, no doubt he would still have desired to add to his possessions. Russia, as you know, is a very cold country, and the winters there are so severe, that those who have not been accustomed to such a climate cannot endure it without much suffering. It was Napoleon's intention to get all his great army into the city of Moscow, where they might be snug and comfortable till the cold weather had gone by, and then he purposed to march onwards, and to take Petersburg, the capital of the country.

Now the Russians, finding themselves in a desperate situation, determined to deliver themselves by a great sacrifice. They knew that if they were to destroy the city of Moscow before the French got possession of it, that their enemies would have no place of shelter, and that they would, in all probability, perish in the frost and snow. Now Moscow was an ancient and splendid city ; but great as the sacrifice would be to destroy it, they were deter-

mined it should be made; and soon they set Moscow all in flames. It burned for a long time, the fire raging day after day, with a broad black cloud of smoke ascending from the ruins. Napoleon and his soldiers were at their wit's end. They were obliged to quit Russia, but very few of them got back to their own country again.

Here, again, I cannot but admire the patriotism and wisdom manifested on a trying occasion; and though this Russian instance of making a sacrifice equals not the former one, in benevolence of design and princeliness of spirit, yet is it well calculated to call forth our unfeigned admiration. I want this recital also to be influential in persuading you to acts of self-denial and disinterestedness. Why should we be outdone by the Russians in making sacrifices?

It is not very probable that you will ever be called upon either to make the sacrifice of your lives, for the good of others, or that of your habitation and property; but in a hundred instances sacrifices may be made, and self-denial practised by you, to the good of your scholars and the glory of the Redeemer.

Oh, what a sacrifice was that made by the Saviour of sinners, when he offered himself on the cross! Surely it should make us ready, willing, yea, even desirous to give up our own will, to practise largely self-denial, and to offer freely such reasonable sacrifices as are in our power, for the wel-

fare of all around us. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." John xv. 13. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Rom. v. 8. That Sunday school teacher is most likely to make sacrifices for his scholars, who offers up to his heavenly Father the sacrifices required by him. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psalm li. 17.

The selfishness of the human heart is frightful ; and, on this very account, it is more necessary to learn to make sacrifices. Such sacrifices are for our good, and if made in humble acknowledgment of God's goodness to us, they will not be made in vain. You have read, that "He that hath pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord ; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." Prov. xix. 17. Now, if He, whose are the silver and the gold, will regard favourably the pound or the penny given to the poor, he is not likely unfavourably to regard the more costly sacrifices made by a christian-hearted Sunday school teacher. While I pen down these remarks, I have in my remembrance the sculptured figures of a boy and girl, set up in front of a charity school. Often, in the days of my youth, did I stop to gaze upon them with pleasure. Under the one was the inscription, "Train up a child in the way he should go ; and when he is old,

he will not depart from it:" and under the other, "We cannot recompense you, but ye shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

To their credit be it spoken, there are thousands of Sunday school teachers who are ready to make sacrifices. The following quotation I make from one, whose sentiments I have read with respect and pleasure. He is speaking of a teacher, who, with his whole heart and soul, enters into the work of Sunday schools:—

"It is no utopian idea, that there are thousands of such men, to whom the return of the Sabbath day labours affords far sweeter exhilaration of spirit, than the most novel sight and pleasing excursion of the worldly Sabbath breaker. Such a man engages in his labour with the words of his Divine Master on his lips, 'I delight to do thy will, O God.' No one drives him to his work; his law is love, and love is the fulfilling of the divine law; hence he may add, 'thy law is within my heart.' He does not say, 'I am a free agent, and no one has any control over me, I may do as little or as much as I like, and either work or let it alone, at pleasure. He has consecrated his service to the Lord, and his heart is as much bound to it as if he had made the vow of the Nazarite, not to be broken."

Yes, such a Sunday school teacher as this will make sacrifices, and make them gladly. Where his work is, there he will be. He will give up

his enjoyments, or, rather, he will seek them among his scholars; he will give up his time cheerfully; enduring with self-denial the crowded room, the hot breath of an assembled multitude, and the hum and bustle attendant on a youthful throng. He will regard his scholars with affection, and oft-times, while his heart is with them, his hope will look beyond them, and he will see among them the white robed inhabitants of a world of glory, faces and forms, not unlike the forms and faces of those whom he has taught to read the word of God, and to sing the praises of the Redeemer.

XIV.

DO YOU KNOW THAT KNOWLEDGE IS NOT WISDOM?

AMONG the many things with which you are acquainted, *Do you know that knowledge is not wisdom?* Have you such a clear conception in this respect, that you are not likely to commit an error?

I once knew two twins so much alike, that, when apart, one was often taken, or rather mistaken, for the other. The height, the colour of the hair

and eyes, the dimple in the cheek, and the fair forehead were the same in both, so that even when they were seen together there was hardly any visible difference. As in the case of these twins so it is with many qualities or attainments of the mind ; they are mistaken for one another ; and it is thus with no two attainments more frequently than it is with knowledge and wisdom.

But though so frequently regarded as one and the same thing, it is possible to abound in knowledge and be yet very deficient in wisdom.

“ Knowledge and wisdom, far from being one,
Have oft-times no connexion. Knowledge dwells
In heads replete with thoughts of other men ;
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own.
Knowledge, a rude unprofitable mass,
The mere materials with which wisdom builds,
Till smoothed and squared, and fitted to its place,
Does but encumber whom it seem'd to enrich.
Knowledge is proud that he has learned so much ;
Wisdom is humble that he knows no more.”

I hardly know a more melancholy sight than that of one, who, puffed up with his knowledge, imagines himself to be wise, while all around are lamenting his want of judgment and consistency. This is bad enough in any one, but in him who undertakes to give instruction to others it is doubly to be regretted. If any of you have fallen into this error, well will it be, if you give neither sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till you

have resolved to correct it : before this can be done, however, you must be fully convinced of your mistake.

Wisdom is knowledge properly applied, or, in other words, the union of knowledge with judgment. Were we to load a simpleton with learned books, or to teach him to repeat their contents, he would in neither case be wise. Whether he carried the books on his back, or the contents in his head, if he had not judgment he would still be a simpleton. A parrot may repeat wise words, but they render the bird not a whit the wiser.

Knowing, as I do, that there is hardly an error more common among young people than that of supposing they know much, because they know a little, and of believing themselves wise, because they have made some progress in knowledge, I am solicitous, again and again, to point out to you the danger you are in, in order that it may be avoided. Why should you be spoiled in your youth, and the fair promise of a useful manhood be scattered to the winds?

The best reproof that I remember to have read of that foolish youthful vanity, which has led thousands astray, by persuading them they were men when they were boys ; that they were wise when they were really ignorant, is to be found in the "Children's Friend." Valentine, a gentleman's son, who gives himself many airs on account of his fancied knowledge and wisdom, derides Michael, a

country lad, on account of his hard hands, and despises him and calls him a fool, because he is ignorant of books, and cannot tell how big the moon is.

Valentine, in order that his parents may imagine he has lost himself in a fit of study, walks into a wood and loses himself in reality. Night comes on, and he begins to cry ; for he finds that with all his fancied knowledge and superior wisdom, he is a poor forlorn, defenceless being, able neither to find his way out of the wood, nor to provide for his comfort in it during the night. In this deplorable situation he hears a noise, and finds to his great joy, that instead of being seized by a robber, he is accosted by little Michael.

A wholesome, thorough humiliation, is a nauseous medicine to take ; but for all this, it is the most efficacious to a mind diseased with vanity. Ephraim Holding speaks feelingly, for in his time he has fallen into many of the errors he reproveth, errors of which he would willingly warn you, and from which he would yet more willingly preserve you.

The utter destitution of Valentine, convinces him of his own ignorance and folly, and the ready kind-hearted way in which Michael provides for his wants and comforts, making him a fire, and preparing him a supper and a bed in the wood, convinces him that a country lad may possess more useful knowledge than a gentleman's son. So that he re-

turns home with a humble and grateful spirit, completely cured for ever of his vanity.

It may be supposed by some, that when an old man reproves a young one for vanity, there may be somewhat of jealousy in the case ; some fear that age may not receive the respect due to it, nor experience be estimated according to its value ; but a little consideration will show the folly of a young man supposing that he is equally wise with those who are double his age.

Will any young man, supposing him to be twenty years of age, be weak enough to admit, that during the next twenty years of his life, he shall make no progress in knowledge and wisdom ? If he admits this, he must be weak indeed ; and if he will not admit it, but, on the contrary, insists that at forty he shall be much wiser than at twenty, how then can he refuse to acknowledge that those who *are* forty are wiser than he ? Think of this, my young friends, for, to some of you, it may prove a hint not altogether thrown away. Knowledge and wisdom are, indeed, different things. I have met with young people of twenty, clever at mathematics and the classics, who were mere children in judgment ; while I have known men of forty, acquainted with neither one nor the other, who were old men in experience and wisdom.

The longer I live, and the stronger attachment I feel for holy things, the more highly do I estimate those who take on themselves the office of Sunday

school teachers, and this may be one reason for my being the more anxious that they may abound in attainments, in wisdom, in piety, and in humility. When my work is done, may yours be in progress ; and when my name is forgotten, may yours still be held in deserved remembrance.

Did you ever reflect much on the human mind, that wondrous gift bestowed upon man ? We regard the human frame with attention, and observe how admirably adapted it is to the actions and functions it has to perform ; we cannot but be struck with it as a piece of beautiful mechanism ; but the mind, the infinite mind, is immeasurably beyond it. Oh, if I could but impress you with a due estimation of the infinite value of the mind, you would regard your scholars with additional interest, and delight in imparting to them sound instruction.

“ High walls and huge, the body may confine,
And iron grate obstruct the prisoner’s gaze,
And massive bolts may baffle his design,
And vigilant keepers watch his devious ways ;
Yet scorns the immortal mind this base control :
No chains can bind it, and no cell inclose ;
Swifter than light it flies from pole to pole,
And in a flash from earth to heaven it goes.
It leaps from mount to mount, from vale to vale,
It wanders, plucking honey’d fruits and flowers ;
It visits home to hear the fire-side tale,
Or in sweet converse pass the joyous hours ;
’Tis up before the sun, roaming afar ;
And in its watches wearies every star.”

This very mind, described by the poet, is the costly thing under your care. How wise, then, ought you to be to direct it, and how anxious to impress it, to pervade it, to fill it with knowledge, wisdom, virtue, and piety!

Having taken some pains to discriminate between knowledge and wisdom, I trust that you will preserve the distinction clear in your minds. A mistake or misapprehension in this respect, uncorrected in youth, may be the cause of much confusion in manhood and old age. May it be yours to know and to practise knowledge and virtue, and to attain that wisdom from above, which is "pure, peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated; full of mercy and good fruits." Already has it been said by me, and I am not certain that my pen has not repeated the expression, "I hold it as an axiom, that he who, tied and bound with a sense of his deficiencies, looks above for heavenly aid, with a heart humble enough to feel his own ignorance, and a spirit ardent enough to pursue after wisdom,

Who pants for knowledge, labouring to be free,
And says, I will be wise—wise he will be.

To be in love with wisdom, to seek for it as for hidden treasures, and to pant after it as the hart panteth for the water-brooks, is the case with comparatively but a few; but almost all have a moderate desire to attain wisdom. "Where shall wisdom be found," saith Job, "And where is the place

of understanding ?” “ The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,” saith David, “ and his tongue talketh of judgment.” “ Wisdom is the principal thing,” saith Solomon, “ therefore get wisdom ; and with all thy getting, get understanding.” “ I thank thee and praise thee, O thou God of my fathers, who hast given me wisdom,” saith Daniel. And, “ If any of you lack wisdom,” saith the apostle James, “ let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.” These passages of holy writ point out how highly wisdom was estimated by the servants of the Lord ; to attain it, then, should be the object of our desires.

Power, wealth, and fame, on other heads may shine,
But O, let heavenly wisdom still be mine !

In the pursuit of wisdom, the habit of writing down any remarks of a wise, useful, and profitable kind, that we hear or read, is a good one. You have, very likely, met with the following directions, for the proper use of temporal and spiritual blessings : as to the former, “ Wish for them cautiously ; ask for them submissively ; want them contentedly ; obtain them honestly ; accept them humbly ; manage them prudently ; employ them lawfully ; impart them liberally ; esteem them moderately ; increase them virtuously ; use them subserviently ; forego them easily ; and resign them willingly.” And as to the latter, “ Prize them inestimably ; co-

vet them earnestly ; seek for them diligently ; ponder them frequently ; wait for them patiently ; expect them hopefully ; receive them joyfully ; enjoy them thankfully ; improve them carefully ; retain them watchfully ; plead for them manfully ; hold them dependantly ; and grasp them eternally." The mere reading and remembering these excellent rules will be knowledge ; but when judgment is put into exercise, fully to comprehend and practise them, the result will be wisdom.

As wisdom consists more in judgment than in memory, no wonder that wise men should be slow to speak : great talkers are not often remarkable for the soundness of their judgment or correctness of their opinions. The apostle James's injunction is, " Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak." Desirable as it is that every one should be wise, it is especially so, in the case of those who move among numbers. When a Sunday school teacher drops a wise or a foolish word, it may be picked up by the whole of his class, and become a means of much good, or of much evil. Let not this hint be forgotten.

They who desire to do good and avoid evil will be careful of the words they speak before others, especially on serious subjects.

For the seeds that are sown,
When we talk all alone,
Neither injure nor benefit any ;

But our words in a crowd,
Whether low or aloud,
Are a ban or a blessing to many.

Whatever be the amount of knowledge or wisdom you possess, remember that true wisdom is always connected with the fear of the Lord ; indeed, the psalmist says, " The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom : a good understanding have all they that do his commandments." There is no better way for a man to cure himself of pride on account of his wisdom, than to contemplate for a moment the infinite wisdom of our heavenly Father in the great works of creation and redemption. " O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !"

There is one question that every wise Sunday school teacher will put to himself, and if every unwise one were to do the same thing, it might be the means of calling up a profitable reflection ; it is this : Am I, as a teacher, keeping the main thing in view ? Is the glory of God, and the everlasting welfare of the children committed to my charge, the first object of my desire ? He who can ask this question faithfully, and reply to it favorably, though his knowledge and wisdom be limited, has that within him which will outweigh all other qualities and qualifications. This is the thing that is wanted in Sunday schools ; this is a spirit that will alone urge on a teacher to do his best on all occa-

sions, and keep him humble, while it renders him wise. Were this spirit more widely diffused, and had teachers more abundantly that wisdom which seeketh direction, and which is profitable to direct, then would the kingdom of the Redeemer be extended, and our Sunday schools prosper more abundantly in the land.

XV.

WHAT YOU GAIN, DO YOU RETAIN?

IF there be a little oddity and quaintness in the above question, it is less the effect of accident than of design. A remark or question that possesses some peculiarity, is more likely to be remembered than another. Indeed, I lay it down as a rule, the result of some experience, that a remark, to secure the proper attention of the reader, must be either striking, interesting, or odd. If, then, my question be a little odd, so much the better.

What you gain, do you retain? for if it would be simple to try to lade a pool dry with a cullender, or to labour hard to fill with water a tub which had holes at the bottom, so it would be equally unwise to give yourselves the trouble to become ac-

quainted one day, with what you allowed to escape from your memory the day after.

To refresh your memory on the subject of my homely hints and observations, I purpose to take a rapid retrospect of them, and if I bring them into a small nutshell compass, you will find them, perhaps, the less burdensome to your memory.

How are you going about it? was my first inquiry, for it appeared plain to me, that there were bad ways of doing good things, and that good things are all the easier performed, if set about in a proper spirit and a proper manner. I pressed this on your consideration in different ways, and asked you whether you were merely playing at Sunday school teaching, or entering on your duties in real earnest. In the latter case, I told you that though riches and honors during your lives, and marble monuments in Westminster Abbey after death, were not to be looked for, you would, at least, be approved by the wise and good, possess a peaceful, approving conscience, and have the warm wishes, the true respect, and the heartfelt prayer of old Ephraim Holding.

Do you learn while you teach? was the next question I put to you: hardly can you have forgotten my account wherein I cut such a ridiculous figure in giving a lecture on the globes. I laid down two maxims, which I had from wiser heads than my own; the one was that "He who ceases to learn, soon becomes unfit to teach;" and the

other, that "The beginning of an address to Sunday scholars should fix their attention, the middle of it should interest their minds, and the end of it should impress their hearts." These hints, or pieces of advice, are well worthy of your remembrance.

Are your scholars glad to see you? came next in order; for, however desirable it might be, that you should be glad to see your scholars, it was still more so that they should be glad to see you. I illustrated my remarks by a story of Rosyposy and Nettle-top. These attended a masquerade, where the one was followed wherever he went, and the other avoided wherever he came; and the conclusion drawn by me was this, that cheerful and kind demeanour is a flower which is sure to attract young people, while a reserved, churlish, and severe aspect is a stinging-nettle which is equally certain to drive them away.

Can you bear reproof? appeared to me a necessary question to those who were so often in the habit of reproving others; for

He that instructs should stand aloof

From selfish love of praise:

He that reproves should bear reproof,

And ponder well his ways.

I told you of a severe schoolmaster who had so little discrimination, that a boy who *could not*, received from him, the same punishment as a boy who *would not*; and that on one occasion he lightly reproved a stubborn scholar, while he caught one,

to whom a word would have been sufficient, by the hair of his head, and struck him on the ribs with his clenched fist. A Sunday school teacher should certainly be a model of meekness, and a pattern of piety; and he ought, also, to abound in every good word and work.

Do you study the habits of young people? was asked you with the sincere desire to render the question useful; for I well knew that a knowledge of the habits of thinking, of the likes and the dislikes, and of the prejudices and inclinations of children, would strengthen your hands, and help you forward in the kind-hearted enterprise you had undertaken. I made this appear plain, or at least tried so to do, by showing you how a knowledge of the habits of the lower creatures of creation enabled man to obtain an ascendancy over them, so that birds, beasts, and fishes were easily subdued by him. But the practice of studying the habits and dispositions of the young people you teach, appears to be so reasonable, that I might almost have spared myself the trouble of pressing it on your attention.

Do you look backwards and forwards? was another of the questions put by me, and I tried to encourage you to go forward in what you had undertaken by the following brief couplet,

“ Think well before you pursue it,
But when you begin go through it.”

The great advantage of looking backwards and

forwards, was pointed out to you to be this: that it would enable you to correct past errors, and afford you encouragement in your future course. You may remember what was said by the sea captain, "We keep a sharp look out from the mast-head; for when all is right to starboard, all may be wrong to larboard; and when we have no breakers a-head, we may have a privateer astern." Sunday school teachers have dangers to avoid and advantages to secure, and should therefore look backwards and forwards, as sharply as sea captains.

Are you prayerful, hopeful, and trustful? When this question was put by me, I made the remark, that "Prayer in simple language, is, among christian people, the act of asking God, in the Saviour's name, to do that for them which they cannot do for themselves; and if we all had a due sense of the value of prayer in affording us peace, in exciting hope and confidence, and in strengthening our hands and hearts, there would not be found a prayerless person from Kent to Cornwall, from Northumberland to the Isle of Wight: and I said, also, that if you were not prayerful, though you might be fit for many avocations, you were not fit for a Sunday school teacher. It seems to me indispensable that you should be prayerful, hopeful, and trustful.

Are you patient and persevering? was an enquiry equally necessary with that which preceded it; for without patience and perseverance, a Sunday

school teacher would be but ill provided for the discharge of his duties. The pictures which I drew with my pen, of the fisherman and the hunter, were, as you may remember, intended to show that the qualities of patience and perseverance, were called forth by objects of a very trifling nature; and that it would be your reproach to allow yourselves to be out-done in these qualities by the hunter and the fisherman. I tried to get a lesson of instruction for you from the ant, the bee, and the bird; and hope that I at least succeeded in creating in your hearts a desire to be patient and persevering.

Do you abhor deceit? was not asked with a doubt of disapproving and disliking deceit, but only to ascertain if you had that strong abhorrence of it, which the word of God appears to require. The instances of deceit given by me, of the young girl who broke her mistress's windows, and the deceitful servant who appeared to be afflicted with St. Vitus's dance, afforded you, I doubt not, some amusement, and I trust, also, that they, in some degree, increased your abhorrence of deceit. I told you that the best way to quicken your perception of deceit in your scholars, would be, in a prayerful spirit, to keep a watch over your own hearts.

Do you turn passing occurrences to advantage? was a question illustrated by many examples, to show how easily circumstances might be improved for the good of your scholars. "If a scholar come

to school early." "If a scholar come late." "When the sun shines." "On a dark day." "On a sharp frost." "On a hot day." "When it rains." "After a clap of thunder." "On beginning school." "When the clock strikes." "To a diligent scholar; and "To the scholars when about to return home." All these occurrences were commented on, to show you how to proceed, in the hope that you might so far profit by them, as to be able to get more striking remarks for yourselves. If you were to refer back to these cases, and read them over again, it would not, perhaps, be time flung away.

What is your stock of information? said I, in my next question, for I well knew that an ignorant teacher was not likely to make his scholars wise. But remember, that of all necessary qualifications in a teacher, I considered to be the most necessary the sincere desire to benefit his scholars for time and eternity. I endeavoured to refresh your knowledge, by running over, rapidly, the names of the gods of heathen nations; the general contents of God's holy word; the history of the Bible, and the history of your native land: and I hope I succeeded in not only bringing back to your memory many things you had forgotten, but also in exciting a desire to add to your stock of information.

Are you fond of children? was a question that I was not at all likely to omit asking; because fondness and affection for the young, help us won-

derfully in our attempts to do them good. Love is a lever that enables us to lift many a big stone from our path, with which it would otherwise be encumbered. I thought it most likely that you were fond of children, and I said what I could in behalf of young people, to call forth and increase your love, in case you had not that fondness for them, which I gave you credit for possessing. I said, " Surely, if you do not love children, a little consideration on their helplessness, simplicity, open-heartedness, and teachableness, will move your affections ; and if you do love them, it will make you love them still better than before.

Can you make sacrifices ? was my next inquiry, nor do I now think it to be an unnecessary one ; for, as I have said before, " every good quality you can get into your own hearts, will enable you the better to instruct your scholars. If you possess self-denial, and can make sacrifices, you will the more easily practice patience, forbearance, and perseverance ; what you do will not be done grudgingly ; what time and attention you bestow, will be given willingly ; and in these offerings, as well as in those of silver and gold, ' God loveth a cheerful giver.' " I gave you some noble instances wherein sacrifices were made by human beings ; and I failed not to point out to you, the great sacrifice offered up for sinners, by the Saviour upon the cross.

Do you know that knowledge is not wisdom ?

was the last question put to you, for I wanted you to have a clear distinction between that which only refers to the memory, and that which has to do with the judgment. You were told by me, that it was very possible to abound in knowledge, and yet remain very deficient in wisdom: and that if any of you had fallen into the error of supposing yourselves to be wise, simply because you were puffed up with knowledge, it would be well, if you gave neither sleep to your eyes, nor slumber to your eyelids, till you had resolved to correct it.

To allow the hours, the days, the weeks, and the months to pass by, and especially, the whole year to escape, without considerably adding to your knowledge and practical experience as a Sunday school teacher, is altogether out of the question; yet how many are those who attend the house of God, every Sabbath day in the year, who cannot give an account of a single sermon they have heard. How this matter stands with you for the last year, with regard to your schools and your scholars, is a question worth putting to yourselves; in the mean time attend a moment to the following friendly suggestions, drawn from what you have already read:—

In your praiseworthy course, as christian teachers, try to exercise a sound judgment; lest, intending what is right, you do what is wrong. While you remember to teach others, forget not to learn yourselves. You may be glad to see your scholars, yet

may they not be glad to see you. You may offer reproof in a good spirit, and receive it in a bad one. You may fail to win the good will of young people by not studying their habits. For want of a quick eye, you may be met or overtaken by danger. Without a prayerful spirit, and a hopeful and trustful disposition, you are not likely to do much for the good of Sunday schools. If you have neither patience or perseverance, either get them, or give up your position as teachers. If you abhor not deceit, you will both deceive and be deceived. Improve opportunities, or opportunities will not improve you. If your stock of information be small, you have the more need to increase it. If you are not fond of children, children are not likely to be fond of you. Without self-denial, services are often selfishness. You cannot be wise, till you know that knowledge is not wisdom.

Oh, that instead of these homely hints, I had those to offer which would be more worthy your attention, and more influential in moving you, as kind-hearted christian teachers, to a diligent and successful course. Such as they are, however, try to turn them to account, holding fast every advantage you obtain, and looking to the High and Lofty One, so to number your days, that you may apply your hearts to wisdom. Remember, that the highest and the holiest of all objects is the Redeemer's glory; pursue it in a spirit of love for your fellow-creatures, and especially for your scholars; that

when clothed with white, with palm branches in your hands, you stand among the multitude that no man can number, before the throne of the Eternal; voices familiar to your ears, may help you to swell the mighty chorus, "Blessing and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

XVI.

A SPRIG OF HOLLY

FOR A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

CHRISTMAS was, is, and I trust, ever will be, so long as "the seasons roll," a cheerful time. The young, the middle-aged, and the old, prepare for it, and rejoice when it comes. Grievings are abundant in the world; sorrows there are without number; but this does not gainsay the general truth, that Christmas is a cheerful time.

Oh, what a merciful provision it is on the part of our heavenly Father, that neither sin nor sorrow has banished joy from the world! If one heart be bowed down, another is dancing with delight; and if one habitation be the house of mourning, the next is filled with the sounds of rejoicing.

The very name of Christmas is as music to the ear, sunshine to the eye, and happiness to the heart of the young, for it brings before them holiday and pleasure ; while the matured and the aged look forward with affection to the friendly groups and family gatherings that await them.

You see Christmas as it approaches in the animated eye of the young ; in the increased bustle and business of the shops ; in the holly, the mistletoe, the laurel, and the lauristina for sale in the market-place ; and in the decorated pulpit and pews of the churches. You see it everywhere ; and though the ground be covered with snow, and the eaves are hung with icicles, you can almost feel the warm glow of the flaring fire.

But it is not of the well-spread feast, the happy guests, the flaring fire, the cheerful evergreens, the blithesome carol, and the happy meeting and greeting of Christmas that I am about to speak. We have, most of us, known these things, and may, perhaps, be knowing them still ; and, if so, I hope and trust that we are not unthankful for them, for we should regard these things as instances of God's goodness, and receive them as gifts from him. It is, however, of other things that I would now speak.

I wish, while others are carrying symbols of the season, and enjoying the festivities of Christmas, to put a sprig of holly in the bosom, and a glow of gladness in the heart, of a Sunday school teacher.

Christmas is the end of the year, and is therefore a proper time to look back on the past. It is the herald of a new year, and therefore a suitable period to look forward to the future: let me do both. There is nothing gilds to-morrow with sunshine, so much as a cheerful retrospect of to-day and yesterday.

Believing, as I do, that Sunday school teachers generally, would that I could say universally, feel joy in the prosperity of Sunday schools, I sadly want to drop a few words of hearty encouragement to them. Words that will gather round their hearts, and prompt them to go through the coming year with increased determination, alacrity, and joy.

There are, who think that Sunday Schools have not succeeded; that they have not realised what was expected of them; that they have not performed the goodly promise of their earlier years. But those who hold this opinion, may have set up too high a standard of attainment for the present time, and may have expected more from Sunday schools than in their yet early years ought to be expected. The fact, however, that a multitude, almost numberless, have been trained up in the way they should go, in the hope that when old they would not depart from it, is of itself, a confirmation that Sunday schools have been an abundant blessing.

It is not by comparing Sunday schools with what we wish them to be, that we estimate them aright or derive encouragement: the way to know their

value, is to compare the state of the rising generation now, with the state of young people before Sunday schools were in existence. Is there a doubt as to Sunday schools being a blessing? let the almost unnumbered youthful worshippers that throng the house of God and sing the praises of the Redeemer every Sabbath day, scatter the doubt to the winds.

When a victory, and especially a great victory, is obtained over an enemy, what a noise is made about it; the news of the event flies in all directions; the bells are set ringing; the newspapers are filled with the account; meetings are held, speeches are made; flags are unfurled to flaunt in the air, and honors are freely bestowed. Why, look at the Sunday school victory! This may with some reason be called a great victory; for not merely hundreds and thousands, but millions have been conquered.

Yes! the great Sunday school victory was a conquest obtained over youthful millions, who, fighting under the banners of ignorance, were opposed to the glory of God and the good of mankind. These have been led captive; these have been made wise in God's word; they are ranked among his worshippers, and are now true subjects of the King of kings and Lord of lords!

And who was it that obtained this victory? We know, or ought to know, that in every victory over ignorance, sin, and Satan, it is God alone who teaches "our hands to war, and our fingers to fight," to him, then, be the glory; but under him this vic-

tory has been won, mainly, by the efforts of Sunday school teachers, who, Sabbath after Sabbath, have advanced to the attack. They have endured the heat and burden of the day; they have stood up bravely in a noble cause; they have fought a good fight, and they have won a great victory.

Are you a Sunday school teacher, and can you think of this without a grateful heart? Can you reflect on the amount of ignorance, idleness, profligacy, blaspheming, and Sabbath breaking that has been done away, and the knowledge, the industry, the good habits, and the piety, that have abounded among those who were brought up in Sunday schools? Can you reflect on these things without rejoicing that you have been a teacher? I hope not. I hope, and trust, the remembrance that you have been one among the many in the hands of God, who have so largely contributed to this happy change, will be to you at this Christmas-time, as a cordial to your heart and a sprig of holly in your bosom.

There are two ways of being useful to young people; the one is to teach them what is right, and the other, to keep them from what is wrong. These two ways of usefulness are continually being practised by Sunday school teachers. Of all days in the week, the most evil can be done on a Sunday; because it being a day of rest, so many people of bad habits are unemployed; of all days in the week, the most good may be obtained on a Sunday,

for then the house of God is open, and Christians meet together to be instructed, reprov'd, and encouraged in holy things, and to join in prayer and praise to our heavenly Father. These things being so, what an advantage then, that Sunday should be spent as it now is, by Sunday school teachers, and Sunday school scholars. Christmas is just the time to think cheerfully of Sunday schools, that while the carol singer is chanting his accustomed song, you may with a buoyant spirit join him in the heart-enlivening strain,

Hark ! the herald angels sing,
Glory to the new-born King :
Peace on earth and mercy mild,
God and sinners reconciled.

And have you avoided no evil, think you, in being occupied Sabbath after Sabbath, at your school ? Have you secured no good for yourself while imparting what is good to others ? Who can tell how largely you might have gone into error, and how little you might possibly have known of the truths of the Gospel, had you not been a teacher ? The lessons of instruction in which you and your scholars have been engaged, the prayers you have put up together, and the sermons you have heard in each other's company, may have been as great a benefit to you as to them. Here, then, is a fresh cause for thankfulness, that while you have been watering the young plants in the garden of God,

you have been watered also ; and that while they have budded, you have, also, blossomed and borne fruit to the glory of the Redeemer. If this be not a cause of joy to you, it ought to be so ; I trust it is, and that at this season of general rejoicing, your soul is magnifying the Lord, and your spirit rejoicing in God your Saviour.

At Christmas, the great yearly clock is about to be again wound up, and the pendulum of time may go on swinging to and fro, for twelve months more without stopping. If we should be asked what we have been about during the past year ? If an account were required of the hours, the minutes, and the moments which are gone, it might be a very difficult thing to some of us to give a satisfactory reply ; and in such a case, a Sunday school teacher may, with some satisfaction, point to his Sabbath employment. This part of time has, certainly, been devoted to good ; this precious portion of the year, has, at least, been profitably spent. Has this ever occurred to your thoughts ? If not, think of it now, and think of it with cheerfulness and joy.

Christmas is the time to make up the accounts of the year, to strike a balance of our concerns, and a fearful balance this is to many. We are indebted for countless mercies from January to December. Three hundred and sixty-five days of continued protection, provision, temporal benefits, and spiritual blessings. What is there for which we can claim credit ? We have plenty of idle thoughts, light-

minded words, and useless deeds. We have enough, and more than enough of waste of time, neglect of prayer, forgetfulness of God's word and will, and unimproved opportunities of doing good ; but what have we to put down, that may be said to be to the credit of our account.

Now, if as a Sunday school teacher, you can honestly take credit "for fifty-two Sabbaths of humble and imperfect, but of sincere and hearty endeavours to benefit the children under my care,"—if, I say, you can make such an entry as this in your account, be thankful for the goodness of your heavenly Father, for it will be an entry that thousands and tens of thousands are not able to make. He who can render a good account of his Sabbaths, has reason, indeed, to rejoice that the Father of mercies has moved his mind to do good, and stretched out his hand to keep him from evil.

Think not that I am offering undue praise ; that I am poisoning you with the breath of flattery, and trying to inflate your little efforts, and make you proud. It becomes you, as it becomes all, to be humble ; for after all you have done, or can do, though you should double your diligence, you would be still on the whole, but an unprofitable servant—a sinner, that without a Saviour, would be lost. What I wish to do, is, not to make you boast, but to call forth your thankfulness. I want you to be encouraged to "drink of the brook by the way," and to hold up your head. As the milk-

maid blithely sings at her work, so should you exult in your Sabbath teaching. Look backwards, then, with gratitude, and forwards, with hope and rejoicing; for this is the Christmas sunshine that I wish you to feel in your heart; this is the sprig of holly that I would put in your bosom.

How many are there who keep a kind of open-house at Christmas; feasting their friends, supplying the wants of the poor, and making the season a jubilee of joy. May all such as find pleasure in making others happy, be blessed in their basket and their store, in their going out and their coming in, from this day henceforth and for ever.

“Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble;” but the charities of Christmas, are too often confined to the comforts of the body, that body which will moulder in the grave, while the soul that shall live through eternity is disregarded. You may not be able to feast your friends, it may not be in your power to do much for the poor, but if you still continue your services at the Sunday school, in a humble, dependant, and trustful spirit, again I say, be thankful and rejoice. To teach your scholars to read God’s word, bringing them up in the love and practice of piety, is an act of christian charity, far greater than that of spreading a table with dainties for your friends, or giving of your goods to feed the poor.

It is an excellent rule in all our undertakings,

to look to the end : now the festivities of Christmas are soon over, and only leave us the remembrance of a few happy hours ; they neither teach us to be patient in sorrow, nor to be grateful in joy ; they impart no yearnings to lead useful lives, or to die peaceful deaths. Pleasant as they are, and delightful as it is to witness open-heartedness, liberality, charity, and happiness, still, Christmas festivities do nothing towards mending our errors in this world, or brightening our hopes of another. For this reason, I want you to look to other sources for satisfaction, to see the end of your own acts, and to judge aright of the value of your own services at the Sunday school. If you consider them aright, they will rise in your estimation. You will be in love with your sabbath duties ; you will bless God for his goodness, and rejoice that he has made you a Sunday school teacher.

To lead a useful life, and to die a peaceful death, in the sure and certain hope of a glorious immortality, is worth more than a thousand such worlds as this could give. As an humble-minded Sunday school teacher, looking for heavenly aid, you are securing the one, and are in the high road to the attainment of the other. Go on with confidence, enter on your duties of the approaching year with thankfulness and joy, for another year you may not see.

“ Another year, another year,
O! who shall see another year ?

Shalt thou, old man of hoary head,
Of eye-sight dim, and feeble tread?
Expect it not! time, pain, and grief,
Have made thee like an autumn leaf,
Ready, by blast, or self-decay,
From its slight hold to drop away—
And some sad morn may gild thy bier,
Long, long before another year!

“Another year, another year,
O! who who shall see another year?
Shall you, ye young? or you, ye fair?
Ah! the presumptuous thought forbear!
Within this church-yard’s peaceful bounds—
Come, pause and ponder o’er the mounds!
Here beauty sleeps—that verdant length
Of grave contains what once was strength,
The child, the boy, the man, are here;
Ye may not see another year!”

Think over what I have said, and let not Christmas “merry Christmas;” drive it from your mind. Be as cheerful as those around you, and as thankful for all the good that Christmas can bestow, but forget not that you are a Sunday school teacher; be happy and make your scholars happy too, if you can; but keep their minds, and your own, on a higher object; be not content with happiness here, but aim at happiness hereafter. I have now finished my remarks, and am trying to fancy, that I see you looking backwards with thankfulness, and forwards with hope and joy, with a gleam of sunshine in your heart, and a sprig of red-berried holly in your bosom.

HOMELY HINTS TO THE AGED.

IN some countries it is an easy matter to form an acquaintance with strangers, but in England it is not so : strangers look at each other here, in a way rather calculated to freeze the affections than to thaw the friendly feelings of the heart into utterance. But though this may be, nay, indeed is, the case nine times out of ten when strangers meet, there is no reason at all why it should be the case with us. It would be ridiculous in Ephraim Holding to shift his position, to twirl his fingers, to hem and cough, and talk about the weather, when he sees around him fellow-pilgrims, whose brows are furrowed deeply as his own ; who, like him, have endured the cares of this world, and are looking to the joys of a better. No, no, my friends, here is my hand. If we mean no evil, why should we fear to speak ?

Often do I idle my time in wishing for a wiser head, a sounder judgment, and a longer purse, to enable me to follow out the warm wishes of my heart, when I ought to be putting to the best use what qualities and means I already possess, for the benefit of those around me ; but man is a poor, weak, vain, self-sufficient being ; princely in his desires,

and pauper-like in his deserts. Here am I undertaking to look after your hearts, when no heart that beats requires more looking after than my own.

The world appears a different place to us, from what it did fifty summers ago—do you not find it so? We are not disposed to join in every wild-goose chase, as we used to do; a less hurry, a little more quiet, are desirable: and if we have found out that “all is not gold that glitters;” that the attainment of our earthly objects have not made us quite so happy as we expected, we have, I trust, been taught also, something of the wisdom “which is better than the merchandize of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold.” This is, indeed, “more precious than rubies,” nor are all the things we can desire to be compared with it. Time has been when we have striven hard for earthly honours, but now we are more anxious for Christian graces; and can each of us put up the prayer—

Thou, who art wont thy servant to uphold,
 His melting breast with ecstasy to fill,
 When pondering on thy mercies manifold—
 Thou who hast blest me always, bless me still;
 Grant me a faith that trouble cannot kill;
 Patience, while wandering through this desert drear;
 Desires that bend obedient to thy will;
 A spirit humble, and a heart sincere;—
 Grant me thy grace, O God! my fainting soul to cheer.

You see, my friends, that I take it for granted

you are among those whose faces are turned heavenward. If I thought myself mistaken in this, my heart would ache for you indeed. If there be one sight on earth more lamentable than another, it is that of an old man approaching the grave, without a hope beyond it.

The pains, and infirmities, and sorrows of age are not always borne patiently, even by godly men; how the ungodly endure them is a puzzle to me. It is hard work to give up health and good spirits, and the things that make life so dear to us; but we must not be down-hearted about the matter. In crossing a river, the further we go from the green trees on one side, the nearer we draw to the green fields on the other; and, as the enjoyments of time grow dim to us, the glories of eternity should brighten in our view.

It would not become aged Christians to be unthankful, because some of the good things they have enjoyed are over; this would be like asking a blessing before a banquet, and neglecting to return thanks after it. Let us rather go on "singing of mercy" all our days, grateful for blessings while we have them, and, when they are gone, grateful that we have had them.

Do you find your time, now and then, hang heavy on your hands? Do you feel a fancy that sometimes your young friends neglect you? Is your morning cough a little troublesome? Do you know what a smart twinge of the rheumatism means?

Have you cold feet ? and does an occasional cramp make you cry out ? Well, well ! do not think that these things are against you. No ; they are gentle admonitions, merciful remindings of your heavenly Father, that you are drawing nearer your eternal inheritance. These are among the “all things,” that work together for the good of the followers of the Redeemer ; and the keeping back one of them would be withholding a mercy. To receive gratefully, and endure patiently, are especial privileges of the Christian ; and, if he can also trust undoubtingly, he is armed from head to heel, and the world, the flesh, and the devil, shall assail him in vain.

I find it a much easier thing to talk about Christian graces than to practise them ; much easier to tell others what they should do, than to do it myself. While urging others to submission to God’s decrees, I feel a rebellious heart beating in my bosom ; and, at the very moment that I exhort them to a holy courage, I am often shaking in my shoes with guilty and unchristian fears. Is this the case with you ? It is a good thing to compare notes, now and then, that we may help, and comfort, and encourage one another on our pilgrimage. It is an excellent thing, too, to aim at coming up to the full proportion of the Christian’s character.

In all the pleasures and the pains
That anxious mortals know,
He hears a voice that cries aloud,
“ Go forward, pilgrim ! go !

With girded loins and sandal'd feet,
Thy staff within thy hand,
Go forward, pilgrim, on thy way,
And find a heavenly land."

Does the Bible become more and more precious to you? and does it afford you more and more consolation? Do you cry out with a more fervent energy. "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law?" and do you feel that "the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart?" It should be so, and I hope it is so. I have met with many who knew too little about their Bibles; but I never yet fell in with one who knew too much. You will think that I am preaching you a long sermon; but it is a failing of mine, when I get into conversation, to keep on prosing longer than I should do: this is not the only infirmity that you will have to bear with in Ephraim Holding.

The other day I called on my friend Thomas Baxter, who has about as many grey hairs on his head as I have. We went back to the days of our boyhood, when we were schoolfellows. We spoke of our losses and crosses, and consoled one another that they were passed by. We compared the past with the present, and humbly and hopefully looked forward to the future. Thomas Baxter has an affectionate heart in his bosom, and it seemed to warm

within him while we talked together. He took me round his garden, and into his summer arbour. He showed me his books, of which he seemed very fond; and, among others, one carefully covered over with a cartridge paper cover; but this gave me no pleasure, because I saw his old Bible lying on the table, without any cover at all, and a heap of things piled upon it.

“I tell you what, Mr. Baxter,” said I, having taken off the cover to look at the binding, “this is a good book, and very handsome, especially the back of it here, where the title is printed in gold letters; but why do you keep it up so close in your book-case? It would look very well on that table, with your daughter’s work-box, and the snuffer-tray, and other matters, placed properly upon it.”

“The work-box and snuffer-tray!” said he, opening his eyes wider than before; “not for the world! I have too much respect for the giver of it to use it in that way. ‘Love me, love my dog,’ Mr. Holding; if we really love our friends, we shall be sure to value their gifts.”

“I am glad to hear you say so,” replied I, “for sure I am that you love the Almighty Giver of this blessed book,” putting my hand on his old Bible.

Now, Thomas Baxter was too sensible and kind-hearted a man to feel offended at the freedom of my remark; so he cleared away the heap of

things from his Bible, and, taking me by the hand, and giving it a hearty squeeze, said, "Friend Holding, if ever you see my Bible in such a trim again, tell me that I have no love for it."

I must confess myself to be a little whimsical in these things. I love the arm-chair in which my father sat, for my father's sake; and, for the same reason, I value an old pair of spectacles, which once belonged to my mother. You may tell me this is a weakness; but if you do, I shall not value these things a whit the less: and I love, too, to see the Bible treated with reverence, and not made a seat to sit on, a step to stand on, nor a mere pedestal to show off a work-box and a snuffer-tray.

I saw but this one thing at Thomas Baxter's that seemed out of order. If he were to call on me, most likely he would see many things requiring a sharper reproof than his unintentional neglect of his Bible.

But, come, I may be wearying you with my observations: now the ice is once broken between us, we shall, perhaps, get a little more free with each other. Tell me frankly what you see in me that is amiss, and I will strive to amend it; in the meantime, forget not that you have a friend in Ephraim Holding.

HOMELY HINTS TO MOTHERS.

IF kindness is to be found on earth it is among women ; and if in one heart more than another, in the heart of a mother.

A happy and well-regulated family—and none that are ill-regulated can be happy—is a delightful object to gaze on : the obedience of the servants, the tractability of the children, the neatness and comfort of the dwelling, from top to bottom, what is it all owing to ? Why, to the mother, the mistress of the household. She is the light and the life, the eye, the hand, yea, the very soul of the establishment. Come home when he will, the good man meets with a smile, a cheerful habitation, and a clean hearth. The father, as the head of the family, may be the most important abroad ; he has to provide the “ ways and means ; ” his are the weightier cares ; but within doors the mother is the very centre of the domestic circle.

How anxiously she watches the sleeping infant ! How sweetly she instructs the kneeling child in his morning and evening prayer ! How forbearingly she endures the pettishness, the waywardness, the wilfulness of youth ! How mildly she rebukes and how lovingly she reconciles the angry and quarrelsome. Again, I say, that the mother, the

mistress, is the light, the life, the eye, the hand, and the soul of a well regulated family.

But do not think that Ephraim Holding is heartless enough to become a flatterer! No; he will speak plain truths, for what would he get by deceit? Affectionate, and prudent, and pious mothers, are all, and more than all that I have said; nor have I words wherewith sufficiently to do them honour; but all mothers are not affectionate, and prudent, and pious. Thousands have some of these qualities, but it is the union of them all that makes a mother what she should be. You must let me talk with you freely. I know that you have many and constant sollicitudes, and I feel that you are entitled to kindness, respect, and high estimation; but these things will not withhold me from a few friendly remarks.

I have known mistresses who have been high and haughty, requiring from servants more than what is reasonable; wives who have been extravagant, disorderly, and provoking, foolishly striving for the mastery; mothers who have been careless, injudiciously indulgent, and partial.

Mind, if Ephraim Holding plays the archer, if he draws the bow at a venture, he wounds no one willingly. His shaft is not pointed by severity, nor poisoned with ill-nature.

How do you behave to your servants? Are you satisfied with your own conduct towards them? Do you sufficiently consider that you are quite as

dependent on them for comfort, as they are on you for support? Are you interested in their welfare, and do you try to mitigate their little troubles? And, more than all, do you look upon them as fellow-creatures, fellow-sinners, and fellow-pilgrims to a better world? Do you try to render them happy on earth, and endeavour to help them on their way to heaven?

How do you behave to your husbands? Are you helpmates to them in the best sense of the word? Do you study their comfort, consult their tastes, clear their cloudy brows, bear with their testy humours, and encourage them in their heavenly course?

How do you behave to your children? Do you watch over your own heart in forming their characters? Do you pull up the loathsome weeds that grow in their bosoms, and plant the lovely flowers that will adorn their lives? Do you check every evil, foster all that is good, and teach them that all they can learn will be worthless, unless they learn to "remember their Creator in the days of their youth?" These are straight-forward questions, but I want you not to answer them to me; answer them to your own hearts.

In my calls the other day I met with some lovely instances of affection, prudence, and piety, in domestic life, and some wherein these qualities are not so conspicuous. Two or three of the latter shall be described—not that I like shadows better than sun-

shine, but that you may avoid the errors that attracted my attention.

Yet, who am I, that I should dwell for a moment on the infirmities of my fellow-sinners? I, who have as many infirmities in my heart, as I have grey hairs on my head!

I called on Mrs. Brownlow at an unfortunate moment, for she, not knowing that I had entered the house, was rating one of her maids in a very unfeeling way, because the girl was disabled by sickness from doing her work properly. "You shall pack off to the hospital," said she, "or home to your mother." I am afraid Mrs. Brownlow has a lesson or two to learn, that can only be taught her in the school of affliction; but perhaps something had ruffled her temper, and I judge her too harshly.

I had not seen Mrs. Simmons for some time, and it might have been better had I not called just when I did, for, while waiting a minute in the sitting-room, Mr. Simmons left the house, evidently in anger. I heard a few words that passed before he went. "This is always the case," said he, petulantly, "though I particularly requested you this time to attend to it." "Do not make yourself angry about such a trifle," said Mrs. Simmons; "it may be done in a minute." "Trifle as it is," replied Mr. Simmons, "you knew that doing it would add to my comfort, and that neglecting it would give me pain!"

What the neglect might be I know not ; perhaps it was as Mrs. Simmons said, a mere trifle, and perhaps Mr. Simmons is a little whimsical and hasty ; but, however this might be, if it could have been done "in a minute," to say the least of it, it was neither kind nor prudent in Mrs. Simmons to neglect it.

Mrs. Rollins appeared as glad to see me as if I had come from a far country ; but somehow, her two children required so much of her attention, to manage them, that it a little interfered with the comfort of my call. First, she had to stroke down their hair, which certainly was rather rueful ; then to drag them forward to me, as unwillingly on their part, as if I had been their schoolmaster. " Why don't you make a bow to the gentleman ?" said she ; " I am quite ashamed of you. Where have you been, and what have you been doing, to rumple your collars so ? Charles, keep your fingers out of your mouth. Robert, hold up your head." Then I was treated with hearing both of them make a vain attempt to repeat some verses, which she assured me they could say very prettily. In my next call I may drop a word or two that may be useful. Had the poor lads been taught to make a bow when a stranger came in, to keep their fingers out of their mouths, to hold up their heads, to avoid rumpling their frills, and to repeat what they learnt correctly, it would not have been necessary to have gone through so much drilling in my presence. Mrs.

ROBINSON seems, however, to be an affectionate parent; and, though I could not admire her management of her children, I did admire the love she manifested for them.

I looked in on Mrs. Horton, too, and sat down to dinner in a plain way; but her son Harry tried my patience a little. Not that it was Harry's fault—O no, it was the fault of his mother. Before I had been in the house five minutes, turning round rather suddenly, I caught Harry making a face at me. Now, I like young folks to be full of life and merriment, and thought but little of Harry's prank, though it was by no means approved of; but his indulgent mother fairly tittered again, saying, "That is one of the drollest boys in the world." With such encouragement as this, no wonder that Harry pulled another face at me soon after. While Mr. Horton reverently asked a blessing at the dinner-table, Harry spread out his hands and kept slowly shaking his head, mimicking his father; for which, I naturally expected his mother, who saw him, would send him away from table; instead of which, turning to me, she said, "Is he not a droll boy?" I felt sorry that a serious father and mother should be so blind to the sad consequences that some day must follow their injudicious treatment of young Harry. When the fowls were cut up, Harry stuck his fork in the wing of one of them, and held it above his head. "Put it down this minute, you droll boy," said Mrs. Horton. Harry, however,

was not easily persuaded to do this, for he saw that his mother was laughing. When he replaced the wing on the dish, Mrs. Horton observed to me in a whisper loud enough to be heard by every one at the table, "I do think he is the most comical boy that ever was born."

Harry had not been out of the room ten minutes, after dinner, before a noise was heard in the kitchen. While the two maidservants were having their dinner, Harry had half emptied the vinegar cruet in the plate of the one, and pulled off the cap of the other. The girls were, of course, not a little angry; when Mrs. Horton told Harry that she would not have such pranks played with the servants. "But, bless you," said she, turning to me, in Harry's hearing, "he can no more help it than I can help breathing—he is of so comical a disposition." I took an opportunity of pointing out, in as kind a way as I knew how, my mind on such comicality; but I saw that Mrs. Horton was far from being pleased with me. Poor lady, she is rearing a thistle whose points will get stronger and sharper every day. She is stuffing a pillow with thorns, that will, by and by, affect her head and her heart.

Mothers! mothers! you have cares enough with the most tractable children; what a pity it is that your ill-timed indulgence should in any case add to the weight of your solicitude! But, if I go on at this rate you will think Ephraim Holding a

spy in the camp, an interloper, a listener, a talker of scandal. No, no; I should hate myself if I deserved such a suspicion. Not willingly would I trespass on the peace of any one: to see a family living in harmony is a delight to me: but if there be one member more than another that I honour, and that I should regret to wound, it is an affectionate, a prudent, and a pious mother.

HOMELY HINTS TO FATHERS.

THE longer Ephraim Holding lives in the world, the more is he convinced of the advantage of plain speaking, whenever anything is to be said likely to do good. He has spoken plainly to mothers, and now he will do so to fathers also.

There is that in the name of father that disposes me to pay respect. Show me the father who desires, in the midst of his manifold infirmities, to be a guide or protector, and an affectionate counsellor to his family; to promote their welfare in this world, and to lead them to a better; show me, in a word, a God-fearing, affectionate father, and I will respect and honour him, whether he dwell in a lordly mansion, or a straw-roofed cottage.

In whatever light I look at a father, I always re-

gard him as the pivot on which the whole domestic concern moves ; the house-band, the corner-stone that binds the edifice together ; the roof-tree of the family habitation. If the father be not looked up to, there is something deficient in his head ; and if he be not loved, there is a string out of tune in his heart. Make the best of the matter you can, and after all, if the father plays a second part, there must be an infirmity in his body or his mind—in his judgment or his affections.

I know this is plain speaking and plain dealing, but not a whit the less worth attending to on that account. Ephraim Holding has told you before, that he loves to see things in order ; and there can be no order when persons or things are out of their proper places. If I were to paint a family portrait, the father should stand erect in the centre, the wife should lean upon him lovingly, the children should gaze on him with affection, and the faces of the servants should manifest respect.

There is something of an ennobling character in this position, whose influence every father ought to feel. It is not the idle vanity, the poor pitiful pride, that a little brief authority too often excites in a weak mind, that I would provoke ; but a sense of honourable responsibility, that calls forth the best energies of a man, and prompts him to apply them to the best purposes.

Many a good wife has fallen into the mistake of striving to get the mastery, considering it a kind of

credit to her—a plume of feathers in her cap—to rule her husband. Now, Ephraim Holding is not the man to keep back any honour that can be paid to a good wife, but he dares not give more than God allows. The word of God is a better guide in these matters than our poor opinions. Ephraim will give a text or two that seems to put the matter beyond all doubt, as to whether the husband or the wife should be the head of the family. In the Old Testament it is written thus of the wife—“Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee;” and in the New Testament are the words, “The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the church;” “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands.” Now, if as many texts can be found in Holy Scripture, setting forth the contrary opinion, then will Ephraim Holding acknowledge that he is too great a stickler for the point which he has not sufficient authority to maintain.

Fathers! your post is the head of your family; but if, instead of affectionate guides, you become tyrannical rulers, you are unworthy the honourable position in which God, in his wisdom, has placed you. Ephraim Holding would willingly raise you to honour; but if you abuse it by pride, tyranny, injustice, cruelty, and unreasonableness to your wives, he would be the first to rebuke you. “Love your wives,” as husbands; love them for their

sakes and your own ; and, as fathers, love them for the sake of your children.

As a bird beat about by the tempest finds an asylum in his downy nest, so should a father find a refuge from care and anxiety, in the peaceful bosom of his family.

Wrangling and jangling, of any kind, is bad enough ; but of all wrangling and jangling, that between a husband and wife is the worst. What an unnatural sight it would be, could we behold the members of the same body violently opposing each other ; the tongue railing against the foot, the heart burning against the head, the teeth tearing the arms, and one hand wrenching and grappling with the other. And are not man and wife one ? Is it not written, " And they twain shall be one flesh ?" Again I say, as husbands, love your wives, and, as fathers, love your children.

But let me ask, with all the kindly feeling of a friend, how you are bringing up your children ? This is a point in which we ought to be honest and faithful in our observations, because it is a weak point with many of us. Eli of old, was a good man ; but what was his sin ?—" His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." Happy is that father who can say, in the integrity of his heart, " I have neither ruled my children with a rod of iron, nor allowed them to do evil without restraining them." It is by no means an

easy thing to "train up a child in the way he should go."

The persons who think themselves best qualified to bring up children, are usually those who have no children to bring up. They would do this and that, if they had a son or a daughter; and such and such things they would never allow. Alas! a father's affection often leads him sadly astray, blinding his eyes when he should see clearly, and warping his judgment from that unbending standard it ought to assume. But though instances are too often seen of diligent, moral, and pious parents having idle, immoral, and infidel children, let us not be swift to conclude, on this account, that good example is of little avail.

In these instances it will generally be found that, notwithstanding the diligence, the morality, and the piety of the parents, they have been culpably negligent of some duty that they ought to have performed. They have done nothing, perhaps, which they ought not to have done, but they may have left undone much that they ought to have done.

Fathers, be not weary in training up your young olives; be not satisfied till they bud, and blossom, and bear fruit. Let them see nothing in you to avoid, and everything to imitate. Be not content in pointing out to them the road to heaven, but walk before them in the way that leads to everlasting life.

There is joy, an inexpressible delight, that

gathers round the heart of a pious parent when he sees his children walking in the ways of the God of their fathers, and acting an upright and an honourable part among mankind ; and there is a joy, too, for the pious parents of pious children, when those children are taken away.

“ Parents, reflect ! reflect and weep no more !
To you the precious privilege is given,
Better than adding thousands to your store,
Of adding angels to the host of heaven.”

O that Ephraim Holding could make the heart of every father glow with the desire that his children, as slips of his right hand-hand planting, might flourish and bloom in the paradise of God !

Oliver Honton was a thoughtless school-fellow of mine. He was well brought up, married happily, and had one son. Oliver thought that he loved his son ; but he loved him not enough either to set him a good example, or to reprove his errors. William Honton took to bad ways, and ran a rapid course of sin and sorrow, till, laden with heavy irons, he lay a convicted felon in the condemned cell, waiting for the hour of execution.

In this extremity of distress he was visited by his father, whose grey hairs he had almost brought down with sorrow to the grave. “ I will tell you now,” said William, “ what I never have told you before : I will tell you how I have been brought to this wretched end. I have been led on, encouraged,

and betrayed by one who pretended to be my best friend: he has brought me to ruin."

"Who was it," anxiously asked Oliver Honton, "that acted so cruel a part?" "It was," said William, looking earnestly and upbraidingly in the face of his afflicted parent, "it was my own father!"

Ephraim Holding could add many to this one melancholy instance of a father's infirmity; but this one is enough. Thank God, examples are not wanting of an opposite kind; for the Giver of all good has been abundant in his blessings, and shown mercy to thousands of the children of those who have loved him, and kept his commandments.

HOMELY HINTS TO SONS.

How often has Ephraim Holding caught the sunny glance of a parent's eye, as it lighted affectionately and exultingly on a beloved child! How often has he witnessed an expression of joy that almost mounted to pride, in the approving smile of a parent whose heart yearned towards his son? Pity it is that such glances and such smiles are not worn by parents every day in the year, and every hour in the day. And why should they not be? why

should there be such a thing as a disobedient son or an unhappy parent in the world ?

If children knew better than they do, how much joy and sorrow their good and bad conduct put into a father's and mother's bosom, surely they would do many things which they now leave undone, and leave undone much that they now do.

Bad as the world is, one would think that there was affection enough in the breast of a son to make his parents happy : and so there is in ten thousand instances : let us do all we can to increase it.

I love to see more than common affection between parents and children. Whether their state be high or low, is of little importance, but it is of great importance whether or not they delight to render each other happy. The love of a parent for a child is strong as death. What will not a father do, what will not a mother suffer, to add to the happiness of a beloved child.

Some time ago I was present in a large town, when the scholars of a score of Sunday schools met together to walk in procession to a place of worship. A short woman was bustling about, at one time peeping between the people, at another standing on tip-toe, and trying to look over their heads. When she came to the place where I was standing, she could keep silence no longer, but cried out, " That's my son, sir, in the blue jacket." Poor woman ! her heart was full of her son, and she expected all

the world would be as much interested in him as she was.

I remember once sitting beside an old gentleman, when a gold medal was to be given away as a prize for good conduct and attainments in learning. The medal was presented to a boy of about sixteen years of age, who, it was said, well merited the reward. "Can you tell me who that clever young man is?" said I. "Sir," replied the old gentleman, sitting up at least an inch higher on his seat, "he is my son."

There was all the father at work in his bosom; and no doubt he was much more delighted than if he himself had received the golden medal.

Ephraim Holding notices these things as he moves about in the world, and takes the opportunity of making them known to others.

But shall I tell you?—yes, I will tell you another instance of parental feeling towards a son. It may make your heart ache, but for all that, it may do you good.

In spending a day in a country town, I was led by curiosity to hear the trials of the prisoners in the County Hall. There were three men placed at the bar, who had been found guilty, and the judge was putting on his black cap to pronounce the sentence of the law. One of the three, a young man of decent appearance, who had buried his face in his hands, after sobbing convulsively, lowered his head to the bar and gave a groan. His forehead and

hair were wet with perspiration ; his body trembled, and it was plain that he was enduring the agonies of fear, remorse, and shame.

“ What crime has the unhappy man committed ?” said I, in a whisper, to one who was leaning against me. No answer was returned ; but, as I tried to lift up my hat to prevent it from being crushed, a big tear fell on my hand. I looked up, and saw the horror struck face of a white-headed old man. The truth flashed upon me at once, which was afterwards confirmed :—that white-headed old man was the culprit’s father !

Sons, of whatever age you may be, add to your own happiness by adding to the happiness of those who gave you birth. The words of holy writ, that you learned in early childhood, should influence you as much as if an angel cried aloud, with every rising sun, “ Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

It was but yesterday that I was sitting with my Bible before me, when, turning over the leaves, my eye rested on the book of Proverbs. No wonder that Solomon was called a wise man, when he could write such a work ; but his hand was under a holy influence ; and, in every verse it may be said, “ A greater than Solomon is here.”

The counsel given to all in this glorious book is excellent ; but the advice offered to sons is strikingly

beautiful. It should be not only in the hand of every son, but in his head, and his heart.

“My son! hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother.” “My son! despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction.” “My son! if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.” Why, these three verses are worth three thousand volumes of worldly wisdom; and those sons who put them in practice will reap a richer harvest than they would in gaining the riches of the East.

Sons are usually fond of doing what their fathers do; and fathers will do well to remember this, that a model may be placed before their children, worthy their imitation. When I see a son following his father, looking up to him, respecting his opinions, and honouring him, I have but little fear of his doing well. It is true there are bad fathers, who set anything but a good example; but I trust it is not the case with yours.

Among the Indians of America lived one Taetoo, a brave man; he had a son, Taponee, that he loved, and his son loved and revered his father.

It happened that Taetoo was taken prisoner by a tribe at war with him. Taetoo had heavy chains fastened on his hands and his feet, and he was cast into prison with his son, who shared his captivity.

After a time, Taponee, being a fine youth, was taken before the chief whose prisoner he was. The chief, Willahoo, having no child, wished to adopt

him as his son. "Taponee," said he, showing him rich ornaments for the wrists and the ancles, "choose which you will—they are all at your disposal." Taponee took them up, one by one, and then replaced them on the ground. "As you give me my choice," said the noble youth, "I had rather wear such as my father wears."

It was a noble answer, a high-souled reply, to a tempting seduction; the bonds of his father were more grateful than the gifts of a prince. Sons, refuse not the lesson given by the unlettered Indian.

To you who are young, I would speak earnestly. Let all that is good in your parents be seen in you. The rattle of the earth on the coffin-lid of a parent is a fearful thing; but the consciousness of having been an undutiful son is yet more fearful. Ephraim Holding has known the one, and humbly blesses God for having been kept in ignorance of the other.

HOMELY HINTS TO DAUGHTERS.

I HAVE spoken a word affectionately to the aged members of a family, and I trust they have received it in an affectionate spirit. I have addressed fathers, and mothers, and felt towards them as they feel to-

wards those whom we delight to honour. I have directed to sons my well-meant, however imperfect, observations: and now, I have something to say to daughters, who will wrong me if they take Ephraim Holding to be other than their friend.

If the aged members be the sober and silent monitors, that give a deeper and more pious tone to the affairs of a family; if the father be the roof-tree of the establishment; the mother the centre of the in-door circle; and the son the hope; the daughter is, assuredly, the grace, the ornament, and the joy of the whole. While the mother extends the comforts of those around her, the daughter advances a little farther. She looks about her; observes the prevailing tastes and adopted elegancies of life; blends with the customs of days gone by, the manners of present times, and prevents the family from falling behind the rest of the world. How sweetly she jests her grandfather and grandmother out of their old-fashioned notions! How lovingly she coaxes her parents into those desirable changes, which, but for her, they never would adopt! I am speaking of daughters who have passed the age of childhood.

The important part that a daughter has in prospect, give an interest in her character and her actions, from the time of the dressing her first waxen doll, to the age of womanhood. The lily of the valley is not more exposed to danger, though that, in its loveliness and loneliness, may be nipped by

every unkindly blast, or rent by every raging storm.

When Ephraim Holding regards the weakness, the helplessness of woman, he is only kept from desponding thoughts by the remembrance that "the eyes of the Lord are in every place;" that "the name of the Lord is a strong tower;" and that "the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."

It has given me pleasure and profit to notice, in my visits, the dispositions of daughters in different families. I have seen much to admire, and something to lament. Humility has graced the behaviour of one, and pride has disfigured the forehead of another. Here, I have noticed affectionate respect and tractability, and there pertness and obstinacy. On the whole, however, the good qualities have prevailed. There has been manifested an affectionate, docile, obedient spirit; a love of works of charity, and an attention to holy things, that has at times made my heart glad. A little too much of the love of dress and music, and somewhat too little of the love of solid and useful instruction, may be rather general; but for all this, the good qualities, as I said before, seemed to prevail. O that a more fervent glow of Christian love and holy zeal were felt in every breast: and that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost were abundantly enjoyed by us all!

But if Ephraim Holding finds a pleasure in speaking in praise of daughters, he must not, on that account, neglect to give them a word of caution. Who is there in this wide world to whom advice is unnecessary?

There are seasons when the smile of a daughter is like a sunbeam to the care-worn hearts of her parents. Daughters may do much towards enlivening the shadowy hours of domestic life: they may increase its joys, and assuage its afflictions. A daughter should be an assistance to her mother, a solace to her father, and a comfort to her brothers and her sisters.

O how goodly a thing it is to see a family dwell together in unity! and how evil a thing it is for father and son to oppose each other, and for a daughter-in-law to rise up against her mother-in-law! But away with the unlovely picture, for it is hateful to gaze on. Dutiful children value their parents very highly; and none but a parent can tell how much beyond all price is a good son, and an affectionate, diligent, tractable, prudent, and pious, daughter.

Though circumspection be, at all times, necessary, there is a season when daughters should be more circumspect than ordinary; and that is when they are old enough to be sought in marriage. This is too important a point not to be dwelt upon. Daughters, you will do well to mark the observations of Ephraim Holding. Marriage is an hon-

ourable estate, and, when entered into under suitable circumstances, not to be undervalued ; but there are other things, besides our inclinations, to be taken into consideration.

I have known a daughter labour hard with her hands to support a disabled father, refusing to marry while her afflicted parent stood in need of her assistance. I have known a daughter piously continue to attend the couch of a bed-ridden mother, watching over her declining days, when she might have entered a more cheerful home with her intended husband. These are instances of filial affection that Ephraim Holding loves to hold up to general respect.

But even when there are no restrictions of this kind, daughters, and especially Christian daughters, will do well to use great caution in entering into wedlock. A parent's counsel is of great value at such a season. Many have found, to their sorrow, the bitter consequences of neglecting it.

It is hard for parents to watch over, and water, as it were, their lovely plant, only to see it snatched away by a hand that regards it as a thing of little worth. It is hard when a daughter repays with disobedience the affection of her parents ; and yet, how many a father's hope has been blighted ! how many a mother's bosom been rent with agony, by the imprudent marriage of a beloved daughter !

Let it be remembered, that hasty marriages are, almost always imprudent, though they may not appear so at the time : unlooked for, and unhappy consequences too often follow. Daughters, I will give you a sketch from the life. Alas ! it is too true.

It was but as yesterday that three carriages drove at a rapid rate to —— church. Every one might see that it was a bridal party. There was a gaiety, a light-heartedness, a display, that could not but attract the notice of all who caught only a momentary glance of the rapidly passing pageant. The drivers wore their white favours proudly, and cracked their whips ostentatiously ; and if the fair bride had a tear on her cheek, the sunny smile that settled there soon chased it away.

Come, I may as well tell the truth at once ; I was one of the party. The morn had been overcast ; but suddenly the sky became bright ; and when the youthful pair quitted their carriages to enter the church, a path of sunshine was before them.

What has man to do with pride ? And yet I felt pride as I walked along the flat stones of the church-yard, the fair bride leaning on one arm, and a fair bridesmaid on the other.

It was mine to give away her who had been so ardently sought, and so hastily won ; and in doing so I breathed a prayer that the gift might be valued and found invaluable.

That must needs be a solemn period when beings

of infirmity plight their troth in the presence of the Holy One, faithfully and affectionately to share each other's weal and woe till death shall part them ! But let me hasten on. Their hands were joined, and we left the church, while a blithesome peal rung from the tower.

It was a gay and interesting scene when we sat down to the morn's repast. The mother of the bride acted well her part, presiding at one end of the table, while I endeavoured to discharge the duties of the other. I need not paint the scene. The repast was elegant and tasteful. Unnumbered dainties graced the board, and sparkling wines, and ornamented bridcakes, and green-house flowers, formed part of the profusion.

Sunny was the scene ; but I will not dwell upon it now, Enough that the sparkling eyes of the new-married pair told of the happiness that glowed in their hearts. How could they, indeed, be otherwise than happy, secure in each other's love, and surrounded by kind-hearted and Christian friends, breathing their ardent wishes for their welfare ! Each guest seemed glad : the pair were pledged, glasses were raised to the lip, and the bridegroom gave his thanks.

We knelt together while the minister, who had joined their hands in holy matrimony, committed the youthful pair in prayer to Him who alone could defend them in dangers, direct them in difficulty,

bless them with his grace, guide them with his counsel, and bring them to his glory.

The married pair put on their travelling dresses to commence their wedding journey ; whether for Brighton, or Hastings, or Margate, no matter. For a moment they entered the banquet-room. All around them was sunshine, and kind adieus, and piles of bride-cake, and papers of white kid gloves, and embossed cards, paired together tastefully with silver wire, bearing the names of those who were happy ; and bouquets of flowers met their eyes in all directions. Crack went the whip, whirl went the wheels, and two united hearts, beating quickly, set off on their new career of worldly joy.

Have six months passed away ? O no ! not near so long a period. Not five, and scarcely four. It was yesterday I passed by the church : well might I pause at the gate, for I had not gazed upon the spot since the happy bridal party alighted there. The sun shone not, no blithe peal rung from the tower, but all seemed silent and sad ; yet not sadder than my thoughts.

The happy pair, who so lately entered on their flowery path of domestic joy, had already found it thickly set with thorns. The fairy fabric of happiness, which their fond expectations had raised, had been as completely destroyed as the card-house of a child, blown down by accident. They had disagreed, keenly reproached each other, and parted, with bitter regret that they had ever met ; he to live

alone and brood over the unhappy past, and she to return home to her friends.

Shall I disclose, at full length, my view of the unhappy causes that led in succession to these events? No: never shall Ephraim Holding cross the sacred threshold of domestic life for the unhallowed purpose of holding up human infirmity to view! Enough for him if he can snatch an impressive lesson from the short-lived joys of an unhappy pair, wherewith to warn the young and inconsiderate. Enough it is to say that the parties had married hastily, without a suitable knowledge of each other.

How necessary is this knowledge to those who are to share each other's joys and sorrows till death! How necessary that they should be willing to bear each other's infirmities, as well as to admire each other's excellencies! Daughters, profit by the caution of your friend, Ephraim Holding.

HOMELY HINTS TO YOUNGER CHILDREN.

Now I have caught you, my little rosy cheeks! Come, tell me what you are all playing at! Ho, ho! I can see now; you have a whipping-top among you; that's right, flog away my little fatty;

it is an excellent exercise, and you need not be afraid of hurting the top. Capital! capital! He spins bravely; not one among you can turn round half so nimbly. I question if I could whip a top half so well, for the joints of old men are stiff, and they cannot stoop down and caper as you do. By and by, I shall have something to say about a whipping-top.

Ay! ay! Miss there, in the pink frock, I see that your doll is dressed out as gay as a peacock—blue, and red, and yellow. If I were decked out half as fine, I should have a score of people running after me. Who can tell? perhaps I may have something to say about a doll, too.

What! three of you climbing on my knees at once! That will never do, my merry hearts. I have got but two knees, so you cannot have one apiece, you know. Well, and what have you got on my lap for? Surely you have not found out the gingerbread-nuts in my pocket! I may as well pull them out at once. Here they are! and every one of you shall have some, for I know that they are made of good and wholesome materials.

And now, while you are eating my gingerbread-buttons, you must listen to a word or two that I have got to say to you. Ay, that is right; all of you come round me as close as you can.

Well now, you have been whipping a top, and you find that it wont do at all without whipping. There are some little boys that I know, who, now and

then, want whipping quite as bad as the top does, and they go on all the better for it. You shake your heads, I see ; well, we will say no more about this part of the story. Ephraim Holding was once a little boy, and, for ought that I know, he might stand in need of a whipping as well as his neighbours.

You see that this top cannot stir of itself ; you must make it go round, or else it will never go. This is just the case with all of you. If God had not given you power to move, you could not stir a finger ; you can no more put one foot before the other, without God, than the top can turn round without you.

I see that you are thinking of what I have said, so I will say a little more. The doll that you have there is a very pretty doll ; how clear is the colour in her cheek, and how bright her eyes are ! You might, almost, suppose she was going to speak ; but, no, she can't speak. She is dressed very fine, and looks very pretty ; but, like the top, she cannot stir unless you put her in motion.

Now, tell me wherein you are different from the top and the doll ? You stare at one another, as much as to say, " What an odd question ! the top is a wooden top, and the doll is a waxen doll ; we are not made of wood or of wax either." Well, I know you are not, but you are made of materials that will crumble into dust like wood and wax ; therefore, there is no great difference on that account.

There is a much greater difference than that. Tell me what it is? You are silent. Ay, I see how it is; you are puzzled.

Perhaps you think it is because you are alive, and the top and doll are not alive. That is a great difference, certainly, but it is not what I mean. Look, there is the tabby cat sitting upon her tail; she is alive, she can do more than the top or the doll; she can run and scamper about, and climb trees, and mew, and catch mice; but, for all this, she is like the top and the doll; she has no soul. Now, if God has given you more than he has given to the cat, you ought to be very thankful.

It is your soul that enables you to pray to God, and to understand his word. The top and the doll, after a while, will be broken to pieces; the cat will die, and your bodies will moulder to dust; but your soul will still be alive; it will live for ever.

Now, think, my little dears! as God has been so good as to give you a soul, that is to live for ever—a soul that is worth ten thousand worlds—think how thankful you should be for it; and what care you should take of it.

You are careful of the top and of the doll, and would not hurt poor pussy; and you are careful not to injure your bodies; but you should be a hundred times more careful about your souls.

It pleases me to see you pay so much attention to what I say; perhaps you have been often talked to in this way before; but never mind that: young

people require to be told the same thing, over and over again.

I am an old man, and have lived a many years in the world, and I love to see children happy ; but as I know they cannot be happy without loving God, so I talk to them, that they may love him for all his goodness to them.

You would not put the top nor the doll in the fire, for if you did, the one would be burnt, and the other would be melted. You would not stick a pin in poor pussy, nor in your own finger, for that would be putting you both to great pain ; it would be very weak and foolish to do these things. Do you not think so ? I see that you do ; well, then, how weak, and how wicked too, it must be to hurt the soul.

Now, the soul cannot be injured by the fire, nor by the pricking of a pin ; but I will tell you what injures it very much indeed. It is injured by every wicked word, and every sinful deed. Every child that tells an untruth ; that takes God's holy name in vain ; that steals, if it be but a pin ; that disobeys his parents ; that practises cruelty ;—every child that does any of these things, injures his soul.

You see that, though I am an old man, I can talk as plainly to you as if I were a child. Now then, remember, that Ephraim Holding told you, that a scratch, or a cut does not hurt the body half so much as an ill temper, or a naughty passion hurts the soul.

I want you to grow up as the holy child Jesus grew in his youth, when he was in this world. Perhaps you may remember how that was:—“Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” This will be the way to do good to your souls; this will be the way to be happy.

How soon you have eaten up my gingerbread buttons! You must not, however, soon forget my words. The more you love God, the happier will you be; remember this, and remember, too, a text that I am going to give you, for then you will see that God loves those who love him:—“I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.”

Some day or other, perhaps, you and I may talk a little more about these things; but see! the tabby cat has jumped up, and is playing with the ball of worsted on the floor; you would like to be playing, too, I dare say. Come, Miss pinky, where is your doll? Now my little fatty, once more set about your top, and, while that is running round and round, Ephraim Holding must run off in a different direction.

HOMELY HINTS TO SERVANTS.

FOR me to enter a family circle ; to talk with the aged people ; to converse with the master and mistress ; to have something to say with the younger branches ; and altogether to neglect the servants, would never do at all. I would render " to all their dues ; tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour ;" but, in doing this, I must bear in mind, that a faithful, conscientious servant is deserving of great respect.

It has fallen to my lot, in moving about in the world, to be ministered to by many an upright servant, from my very youth up to this day ; and, therefore, if any man breathing is bound, in common honesty to speak well of good servants, that man is Ephraim Holding. Yes, from the gold-laced liveried footman, to the country lad that runs on errands, and cleans the boots and shoes ; from the lady's maid to the scullion, who scours the pots and kettles—show me a faithful servant, and that servant shall have my respect : but, mind you ! my eyes are wide open to the failings of servants, for all this. In speaking of their bad as well as of their good qualities, I shall do it with a kindly spirit.

We should all do well to remember, that the best and wisest of mankind have acknowledged themselves to be servants. Indeed, to be a faithful servant of God, is to enjoy the highest honour that can be put upon man. If we thought of this more, perhaps we should be more disposed to respect a good servant than we are. But servants should also consider how great a reproach it is to be unfaithful. What a pleasant thing would it be, if men, instead of giving themselves the trouble they do, to trace their relationship to the high and mighty of the earth, would endeavour to trace back their genealogy to some faithful servant of God, that they might tread in his steps, and imitate his holy example!

Throughout the holy Scripture, the patriarchs, the prophets, and the apostles, are continually called "servants of the Lord;" and, even of our gracious Redeemer it is said, that He who "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." See, then, how the character of a servant has been honoured! and see also what all ought to be who sustain that character; honest in all things, and faithful even unto death.

It may be that some powdered lackey, whose garments are stiff with gold or silver lace, may glance over these remarks of Ephraim Holding; and, if so, to him I say with affection, Are you the servant of God? for, if you are not, there is much

reason to fear that you are not faithful to your earthly master. Feel not offended at my remark, unless you are satisfied it is unjust. He who can be unfaithful to God, may well be suspected of unfaithfulness to man.

And if some simple-minded house-maid, or cook, or nurse-girl, as she sits in her clean-swept kitchen, or upper chamber, on the afternoon or evening of the Sabbath-day, should take up these observations of Ephraim Holding—if she be walking heavenward, a sincere, however lowly, disciple of the Redeemer, let her be encouraged; let her know that there are many, above her situation in life, who do not look down on servants with pride, but on the contrary, highly respect them, and feel interested in their temporal and spiritual welfare. I would willingly speak only in praise of servants, but that would not be acting uprightly. There are many failings among them—sad failings; let me glance over a few of them.

A man-servant, whose life had been mostly passed in service, told me, that if he were to describe one half of the deceit and roguery practised by servants in high life, I should not give credit to his assertions; folly, extravagance, waste, and robbery, are recklessly persevered in.

“I have known,” said he, “men-servants, after leaving their master at a ball, drive round in his carriage to pick up their own company, return home, dress themselves in his clothes, and drink his

wine with their dissolute companions, as freely as water."

A respectable servant, on whose word I can rely, once told me the following facts:—

"At a place in which I once lived," said she, "a certain sum was deducted from what I otherwise should have received for wages, in consequence of my being supplied with tea and sugar. My fellow-servant called me a fool for making such an agreement, as I might have saved myself the sum very well, by helping myself, as she had always been in the habit of doing, from the china closet, whenever an opportunity occurred.

"Another fellow-servant had not been allowed meat for supper; 'but,' said she, 'I will tell you how I manage the matter. I cut off more meat at dinner-time than I can eat, and put by as much as I want for supper, so that no one knows anything of the matter.'" The same girl, on taking away the cloth from such of her puddings as were boilded in a basin, frequently cut off the pudding level with the basin for herself, before she turned it in the dish for the dining-room, affecting all the time to care little for pudding.

"Once, when I had entered on a fresh place, I had occasion to call on a married woman, who asked me if she could do any needle-work of any kind for me. Not exactly understanding her meaning, she showed me a large pocket of green tea, telling me that she had it from some servants in the

neighbourhood, whose needle-work she did in return. Ever since her marriage she had, in this manner, been regularly supplied with tea.

“ A servant girl that I knew, felt offended at hearing her master express himself proudly about servants drinking out of the same vessel as himself; this, he had no doubt, was the case at times, when they went to draw the drink in the cellar. After this it was the regular custom with the girl, when ever she drew drink for her master, to breathe with all her might into the glass or cup, in order that her proud master might be spited.”

Now, these are sad instances of dishonesty and bad conduct on the part of servants. Look at them for a moment, and ask yourselves whether these are actions of which an upright and conscientious servant can be guilty.

I well remember once uncorking a bottle of wine myself, when, being called away, a glass-full had disappeared on my return. Marking the bottle, I again put it in the cupboard, and soon after found another glass-full gone. In this way I went on, putting a mark level with the wine in the bottle, without ever pouring out a drop. In a few days the bottle was quite empty.

A friend of mine found a pot of currant jam grow less and less very rapidly; when he spread very freely over the top some ipecacuanha. A servant who was suspected, very shortly after, by her sudden and violent sickness, made it very apparent

in what way the currant-jam had been disposed of.

It is not more than a few weeks ago, that a man was taken before the magistrate, who had in his wheelbarrow more than a hundred weight of wax. This had been obtained from servants in houses where wax candles were used; and every one who is accustomed to glance over the newspapers, must have been struck with the frequent robberies of plate by servants; but enough and more than enough on this shadowy side of my subject. Ephraim Holding grieves that servants should so far stand in their own light, as to consider a few bits and drops, a few candle ends and scraps of tea, a sufficient return for the loss of their character, and the absence of their peace of mind.

Servants! servants! you are better known than you may think for; your little pilferings, your pitiful deceits, your treacherous tale-bearings, do you much more mischief than they do those you serve. The wages you receive are not paid for your work alone, but for your honesty, your fidelity, your good behaviour, and dutiful obedience and respect. Do justice to yourselves, by doing justice to your masters and mistresses, for a curse clings to the wages of dishonesty and falsehood.

I have known servants who would blush at a mean action, who could not have been bribed to deceive those they served, and who would not have

been dishonest for all the wealth of the Bank of England.

More instances than one have come to my knowledge, of servants, who, after devoting their best days to the families to whom they were attached, administered to their wants in the season of calamity, and died, leaving them every penny of the property they had saved in their service. Such servants are among those whom Ephraim Holding delights to honour.

Often have I read the inscription in a country church-yard, "To the memory of a faithful servant;" and, while reading it, I have felt as kindly toward the poor perishing dust beneath the stone, as though it had been that of a brother or a sister.

Servants, let me urge upon you the service of God, that you may be better and happier servants in your places on earth, living a life of faith in Jesus Christ, and of obedience to his gospel; that when the time shall arrive that the servant shall be equal with his master, you may hear the welcome words, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

ON DISAPPOINTED HOPES.

FROM the cradle to the grave, we occupy tenfold more time in wishing for what we have not, than in enjoying that which we have. Ay; and where we once offer up praise for benefits received, we twenty times petition the Father of mercies to add to the number of the gifts he has already bestowed.

There is a restless discontentedness that seems to cling to us like a leprosy. Give a child an apple in each hand, and he will want the one that remains on the table; and, give a man thousands of gold and silver, and tens of thousands will become the object of his desires. Experience will warrant the belief, that the possession of Europe and Asia would excite a yearning in our hearts for Africa and America; and that, if to these the moon could be added we should never rest in peace until we had obtained the sun.

Do you remember, when a child, looking forward to be put into trousers? You do: so do I—so do we all; and, perhaps, no single circumstance, in our eventful lives, has ever been more important to us as men, than that occurrence appeared to us in the days of our childhood.

Oh, it was a glorious moment, a glorious epoch

in our lives, after all our longings, and all the delays to the promises we had received, to find ourselves "little men!"—to see, not in a dream, but in reality, the shining blue cloth, the glittering gilt buttons, and to feel the silver sixpence, and the new penny, in our very own pocket, as we fumbled again and again with delight, and listened to the jingling sound.

Sceptres, and crowns, and jewels rare,
The sovereigns of the world might wear;
But what cared we for such like things,
When we were happier far than kings!
The tiny joys that waked our pride,
Were more than all the world beside.

But there came a time when these things delighted us not as they were wont to do: we saw other objects that appeared desirable, and to see them was to covet them: these, in their turn, were attained and discarded. Boys cannot always be happy, and so we sighed to become men.

Do you remember, when at school, how you wished to be put apprentice? and, when an apprentice, how you longed to be out of your time, and become a master? No doubt you do; so do I; and so do we all; but we were not quite satisfied when we had obtained the object of our desires.

As it was in our childhood and youth, so has it been in our manhood; object after object has been attained with no better success. As he who picks

up shells on the sea-shore always has one more preferable in his eye than in his hand, so we ever hope to add to our happiness by some new acquisition. This is the case, not with one, only, but with all.

We have never yet attained one earthly advantage that has given us more than a temporary joy ; we have never gained aught that has satisfied our desires. Is this your experience ? I know it is : it is mine ; it is the experience of us all.

We have all blown our bubbles, and ran after butterflies, in our childhood, our youth, and our manhood ; the bubble has burst, and the caught butterfly has been crushed, not yielding us half the satisfaction that they did when in the air.

Who is there among us who can look back through the vista of threescore years, without wondering that, being so frequently deceived, he could so confidently trust the empty promise of future joy ? It is in vain we try to deceive ourselves.

Fortune may favour, Fancy may beguile,
Hope wave her golden wings, and sweetly smile ;
But sad Experience, with a brow o'ercast,
Sighing with grief, and pointing to the past,
Whispers, the fair illusion to destroy,
That joy unclouded is not earthly joy.

When we were young there was some excuse for us ; but what excuse have we now ? I am

speaking to such as have grey hairs on their heads, ay, and to those too, who have no hair at all.

The homely adage tells us that "old birds are not caught with chaff." If this be true, old birds are much wiser than old men. Shame upon us, that it should be so! but we are continually forgetting the good gifts of God, and pursuing objects which are no better than chaff when they are attained.

Did you ever reckon up God's mercies? or, rather, did you ever try to reckon them? for they are more in number than the hairs of our head. Let us run over a few of them, for it may show, in a stronger point of view, our thanklessness and discontent.

God has given us a body, soul, and spirit, endowed with rare capacities and powers of enjoyment, and placed us in a world of beauty, wherein we cannot tell whether the earth beneath our feet, or the sky above our head, is the most glorious to gaze on.

For us the flowers of spring unfold themselves, and the fruits of autumn hang in clusters on the tree. The sun gilds our path by day; and, if we walk abroad by night, a thousand glittering lamps are hung in heaven. God has given us dominion "over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth."

But not to earth's contracted span alone has he

limited his goodness. He has given us his holy word, abounding in exceedingly great and precious promises for those who fear him, love him, and obey him, and delight in his mercy. We have tranquil Sabbaths, and a throne of grace, and seasons of prayer, and the influences of his Holy Spirit, to increase our consolations, to brighten our hopes, and confirm our faith in the reality of eternal things. What he has bestowed here, cannot be fully described, and "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared," in another world, for his people; they have "promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."

Now, these are a part, only, of the innumerable gifts of God; and yet, in the midst of this unbounded profusion, we dare to be unthankful! Yea, though "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," we ungratefully live in a spirit of repining, from year to year, and from day to day. Shame! shame upon us all!

Experience presents to my memory too many human beings repining in sickness, who were never grateful in health; too many complaining of God's judgments in adversity, who never acknowledged his mercy in the day of their prosperity. Surely, if we blame the hand that smites us down, we should honour the arm that raises us up. "Shall

we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"

But the spirit of unthankfulness, that seems to mingle with our very marrow and our bones, is as impolitic as it is unjust. Should a beggar starve with a wallet full of provisions at his back? or a man die of thirst, with a fountain bubbling at his feet? We should enjoy, gratefully enjoy, what God in goodness has bestowed, and try to be content with such things as we have, for "a contented mind is a continual feast."

When we hear of Napoleon passing his days as a captive on a rock, because he was not content to sit as a conqueror on a throne; when we read of Alexander blubbering like a boy who has lost his marble, because he had no other world to conquer, we indulge in some sapient reflection, and exclaim against the unthankfulness of power, and the unreasonableness of ambition; but, are we not acting the same censurable part continually, in undervaluing the blessings we possess, and eagerly pursuing what is but "as chaff which the wind driveth away?"

Let us turn our attention more than we have done, to the costliness of a contented spirit; and, if we cannot be satisfied with what we have, let us try to get more of God's grace, and a brighter hope of sharing his glory.

At the moment that I note down these disjointed observations, a hearse, with sable plumes, and

mourning-coaches, with coal-black horses, pacing slowly, with arched necks, are passing my window. How silently, yet how eloquently, they set forth the worthlessness of wordly pursuits, compared with the value of eternal things! Let me close my remarks in the words of a favourite Collect: would that its spirit was as familiar to my mind as the letters that compose it are to my memory!—"O God, who hast prepared for them that love thee, such good things as pass man's understanding, pour into our hearts such love towards thee, that we, loving thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

ON THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE.

THIS is a goodly world in which we are placed, and it is well to look at the bright side of it; brambles and thorns there are in it, but then look at its roses and posies!

If you tell me that it is a waste, howling wilderness, I will tell you that it is only sin that makes it so. O gaze on its rising and setting suns, its green fields, and glowing skies! Call to remembrance its balmy gales, its singing birds, its blushing fruits, and blooming flowers! Have you friends, valued

friends, and relatives dear to you as the apple of your eye? Have you a keen conception of creation's beauty, and a lively sense of domestic peace? If you have, you will want words wherewith to set forth how closely the world, and the things of the world, cling to your heart. Still it is well to prepare for a change. I have just returned from a visit to an infant's grave. I went with the bereaved mother to the church-yard, the treasure-house of her beloved one's remains.

It was a retired spot, surrounded with fair fields, and goodly oaks and elms—meet place for reflection, and for pondering on the mutability of earthly things. Fathers feel for their children, but they know not a mother's affection. The mother whom I attended to that village cemetery, when she seated herself at the foot of her baby's grave, felt as a mother.

This little circumstance has given a sober turn to my thoughts. I have been thinking of the frail tenure on which we hold the fairest things in this fair world, and many a bitter portion of past experience rises in my memory,

“To grave the mournful moral on my heart.”

The fond mother gazes on the opening bud that she has watched with prayers, and watered with her tears. She enjoys the present, she anticipates the future, when her fair floweret shall expand, and put forth all its loveliness; but, suddenly, it is

touched by the north wind's icy fingers, its beauty fades away, and it lies blighted at her feet. The lovely one was held on the tenure of a breath; it came up like a flower, and was cut down. On the same tenure do we hold all that is earthly.

Change is inscribed on all things beneath the skies; and this should be taken into the account, when we estimate what we possess.

The suns of summer, and the storms of winter, have been many, since four school-boys, ardent in their dispositions, were playing together on a village green. They had wandered the same fields, climbed the same trees, and slaked their thirst at the same rivulet, for years, for they had long been schoolfellows. Apart from their companions, boy-like, they were boasting what they would do when they became men.

One might have thought, that where ardour, and energy, and youth, and health, were united, the fair future had something substantial to rest upon, and that the gay dreams of youth would be realized in after years. What bright bubbles we blow, and how soon they burst!

One of the four valued himself upon his strength; and, as his forefathers had died at a goodly age, he expected to be well stricken in years ere he died; but the fever shook his well-built frame, and, before he was twenty years old, they carried his breathless clay to the church-yard, and laid it in the grave.

Another was in love with fame, and panted to become a hero ; he longed to share the dangers of the battle-field, to mingle with contention, to drink in the sounds of the trumpet blast, the neighing of the war horse, “the thunder of the captains, and the shouting.” He entered the army, looking forward to a pair of epaulettes ; but a quarrel with a superior officer dispelled the illusion. A challenge was sent, and of course accepted : at the first fire he fell, with a bullet in his bosom.

A third yearned to see foreign lands, and foreign lands he saw ; but when are the wandering eye and the wandering heart satisfied ? The icebergs of the north were gazed on, and the sultry sands of the equator were trodden ; but he returned not to his native land to tell of the wonders he had witnessed, and the dangers he had endured. The ship, whose sails were filled with homeward breezes, foundered, and bore him to the bottom of the yawning deep.

And what shall I say of the remaining one, whose head and heart were as full of the gay dreams of future years as those of his hapless companions ? He has lived till the grey hair of age has proclaimed his time to be short ; and though he can still “sing of mercy,” he feels, while his pen is employed in noting down these mournful passages of his past experience, that his future earthly expectations hang upon a thread.

How industriously we build on the shifting sand !

How eagerly we blow the bursting bubble! How ardently we pursue the shadow that eludes our grasp! Though we know that our lives are a vapour that passeth away, and that in a moment we may be called hence, we are all saying, after our own fashion, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." "This night thy soul may be required of thee," is a supposition that we cannot realize: we stand on the tottering avalanche, with as much confidence as though our feet were based upon the pyramids.

It is not to dispel hope, but to chasten presumption, that I thus speak. We ought highly to value our temporal mercies, but we ought not to estimate them as though they were eternal. Change is deeply inscribed upon them, in broad, legible characters; and to refuse to read the inscription, is to lose the benefit of a lesson that should ever be present to our remembrance.

I might point to the page of history, and adorn my subject with sketches of departed greatness. Where is Nineveh, "that great city," and the mighty host of Sennacherib? Where is Belshazzar, and brazen-gated Babylon? Thebes is in desolation; and, of Jerusalem, scarcely one stone rests on another. A change has passed over them; and the splendour and power of Greece and of Rome have passed away. But why should I meddle with things too high for me? Better will

it be to leave the unwieldy affairs of empires, and take my illustrations from common life: our own experience comes closer home to our hearts.

The changes which take place around us, as we pursue our earthly pilgrimage, are frequently of a mournful kind; and this is still more the case when the furrows of age are graven on our brows. The house, the village, or the town, where we were born, becomes altered and strange to us; the trees, whose grateful shade we courted, are cut down; the friends we loved, one by one pass away; and infirmities, of various kinds, become our companions: we tread softly, where we have been wont to press on in the turbulence of health; and we not only find, but feel the emptiness of all things here below. Mankind becomes a new race of beings, in which the friends of our youth are few, or far removed.

“Change is the diet on which all subsist,
Created changeable; and change at last
Destroys them.”

Some time ago I went to the favourite haunt of my bygone days, where once stood the ash on the green, the cottage at the corner of the paddock, and the coppice on the slope of the hill: the tree was hewn down, the cottage removed, and the coppice ground was changed into a ploughed field. Most of the inhabitants of the village were dead; and such as were alive were aged and infirm. Most likely you have met with changes such as these.

But what are these things in comparison with

others, for which we ought to be prepared ! Riches sometimes make themselves wings, and fly away ; friends closely attached to us become estranged ; and, not unfrequently, we are bereaved of those whose presence is as a sunbeam in our paths. In mind, body, and estate, a change may take place to our disadvantage.

Seeing that these things are so, let us flee to the Rock for refuge ; let us fix our hearts and our hopes on Him who changeth not, but is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; that when the trumpet shall sound, and we shall stand before the judgment seat of Christ, we may be changed into His glorious image, who offered up himself a ransom on the cross for sinners, that all who believe on him might not perish, but have everlasting life. Let us keep the golden gates and the unchangeable glories of heaven full in view, and the changes of earth will be patiently, yea, joyfully endured.

ON THE NEW-MADE GRAVE.

WE are more apt, in our onward course, to be caught by that which affects our senses, than by what appeals to our reflection. The roar of cannon, and the rattling thunder, arrest and secure our attention, while the silently-falling dew is disre-

garded, though the latter is of immeasurably more importance to us than the former. It is the same among mankind; the loudest and most vehement speaker, ever receives, from the multitude, the greatest degree of attention. The more we reflect, the more likely we are to correct this error.

To reflecting minds, things the most silent are frequently the most eloquent. To them, the voiceless creation cries, as it were, aloud. The declining day, the setting sun, the faded leaf, the season's change, and the new-made grave, all proclaim the mutability of earthly things. I want to press this matter affectionately on your remembrance. I want you to hear a voice in solitude, in darkness, and in silence.

“Hark! hark! a cry is gone abroad from every peopled plain,
It sweeps along the sounding shore, it murmurs from the
main;

From every varied spot of earth, where human creatures be,
It echoes loudly through the land, and spreads from sea to
sea.

From palace wall and humble cot—from town and village
lone;

From every newly-open'd grave, and every churchyard stone;
In every language under heaven, a voice repeats the cry—
‘Thy days are number'd, mortal man; and thou art born to
die!’”

Whate'er thy state may be, whate'er the paths thy feet have
trod,
Forsake thy sins, and lowly kneel, and seek the Lord thy
God.

Prepare thee for the bed of death, though now thy bosom
burn,
For dust thou art, and suddenly to dust thou shalt return.
What though ten thousand flattering tongues conspire to
praise thee now,
Though glittering stars adorn thy breast, and diadems thy
brow ;
'Mid all thy dreams of earthly bliss, thou soon shalt hear the
cry,
'Thy days are number'd, mortal man, and thou art doom'd
to die!'"

I hold it to be a good sign in age and youth, to be given to quiet musings. "Commune with your own heart upon your bed and be still," says David, in the 4th Psalm. There is in this stillness, this holding communion with ourselves, much that is favourable to wisdom, virtue, piety, and peace.

Experience tells us, that whether we are musers or not, there is evil enough in every heart ; but I do not think that the vicious and abandoned part of mankind are given to muse much on anything that will not increase their pleasures, nor add to their worldly possessions. Never do I see any one thoughtfully wandering from one grave-stone to another, in a churchyard, without judging favourably of their affections, and their dispositions to be helped on their way to heaven.

If I could, I would send you all into the churchyard more frequently than you now go there ; ay, and I would go there myself more frequently, too ; for no one stands more in need than I do, of being

reminded, that the heart of a Christian man should be set on better things than are to be found on this side eternity.

“Let others fondly seek the vain reward,
 The fleeting phantom of this world’s regard :
 Be theirs at every hazard to be great,
 To live in splendour, and to sit in state ;
 But, Christian, thou with nobler views must rise—
 This world thy prison-house, thine home the skies.
 Leave, then, the proud to grasp the rod of power,
 The glittering baubles of an earthly hour,
 To bid the prostrate throng in homage bow,
 And place a diadem upon their brow ;
 Thy crown with brighter gems than theirs shall shine :
 Earth is their kingdom, heaven above is thine !”

Let me give you a few of the warning admonitions of Scripture, that are to be found scattered, here and there, in our churchyards.

“Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.”
 Gen. iii. 19. “Our days on the earth are a shadow, and there is none abiding.” 1 Chron. xxix. 15. “Boast not thyself of to-morrow: for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.” Prov. xxvii. 1. “Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord may come.” Matt. xxvi. 42. “As the Lord liveth, and as thy soul liveth, there is but a step between me and death.” 1 Sam. xx. 3. “Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matt. iv. 17. “Set thy house in order; for thou shalt die and not live.” 2 Kings, xx. 1. “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of

Christ ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." 2 Cor. v. 10.

But there are consolations, and encouragements, as well as warning admonitions, on the grave-stones of the departed, and they often strike us there, more forcibly than when we read them in holy writ ; such, for example, as the following :—

" Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright : for the end of that man is peace." Psalm xxxvii. 37. " Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." Rev. ii. 10. " Many are the afflictions of the righteous : but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." Psalm xxxiv. 19.

" God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave ; for he shall receive me." Psalm xlix. 15.

" We, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Pet. iii. 13.

" They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." Psalm cxxvi. 5.

" We know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." 2 Cor. v. 1.

" For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." 2 Cor. iv. 17.

" God so loved the world that he gave his only

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." Job xix. 25, 26.

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." 1 Cor. ii. 9.

Now, such passages of God's word as these, are, to many, meat and drink—health to their navel, and marrow to their bones. I may be told that numbers, who occasionally wander among the tombs, go there rather for amusement than for profit; but I would not on this account think lightly of their visits. The scene around them in the grave-yard, is favourable to reflection, and the inscriptions that meet their eyes are often of an arresting kind. In whatever part of the cemetery they may be,

"Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh."

And, if they are led within the venerated pile, to gaze on the more costly memorials of the dead—the marble monuments of the great—they are again reminded that

“The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike the inevitable hour ;
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.”

It has often struck me that profitable volumes might be gleaned from inscriptions in churchyards ; not like the works of light-hearted travellers, who have, too often, collected together from consecrated ground, all they could find that was humorous or ridiculous, wherewith to amuse their readers, but a collection of sober, pious, and striking inscriptions. Let me explain what I mean, by a few examples.

“Art thou prepared, reader ! with the grave before thee, to be judged with the same judgment with which thou hast judged others ?”

“Live near to God in this world, if thou wouldst dwell with him in that which is to come.”

“The grave can neither withhold the righteous from happiness, nor protect the wicked from unutterable wo.”

“Though the wicked may laugh in his life, the good man alone can smile in his death.”

“The brightest earthly hope is but a brilliant bubble bursting against a tombstone.”

“Reader ! if thou thinkest lightly of the happiness and misery of another world, remember that millions of ages crowding on millions of ages—millions of ages crowding on millions of ages—and, again, millions of ages crowding on millions of ages, are but the beginning of eternity.”

“How poor are the gilded escutcheons, and the perishing records of the mouldering marble, when compared with the well-grounded hope that the spirit of the departed is with God!”

“The stone that flatters the dead, deceives the living.”

“If death be hard to bear, as the end of temporal pain, how may it be endured as the beginning of eternal wo!”

“Does the grave affright thee? learn to look beyond it.”

How vain are all worldly pursuits, when placed in competition with the salvation of the soul!”

“Go forward, Christian, on thy heavenly pilgrimage! Though a crown and a cross should be placed before thee, let not the one tempt, nor the other deter thee from thy path. Tremble not at death—it shall end thy sorrows; fear not the grave—it is the portal of immortality: thy home, thy heaven is before thee, where He who redeemed thy life from destruction shall crown thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.”

“Reader, improve thy fleeting hours, remembering that the most precious portion of thy time is that which is nearest to eternity.”

“Happy is the pilgrim who, amid the thorns and briars that obstruct his pathway to a better world, can discover none of his own planting.”

Even accidental visitors of a churchyard are not unlikely to be profited by such inscriptions as these;

while, still more accessible are the hearts of those who go to visit the resting places of the dust that is dear to them.

Many scenes have I witnessed among the green hillocks of a churchyard, that have tried the very heart-strings; one of these I shall give you, though it is possible I may have alluded to it before.

Walking thoughtfully from tomb to tomb, I came at last to the retired part of a burial ground, where I observed an aged woman—who must have passed through at least three score years and ten of her pilgrimage—standing in a mournful posture at a new-turfed grave. There was no marble to mark the spot; not even a grave-stone to tell her “where they had laid him;” but that did not signify. She measured the hillock with her eye, and slowly paced around it, stooping down now and then, and patting the green sods with her fingers. After this, leaning both hands on her stick, and fixing her aged eyes on the grave, she burst into tears.

It went to my very soul. I indeed felt for the old lady, and sighed for very sympathy. My heart yearned to join her, but I could not trespass on her reflections. Again she walked round the grave, and again a flood of tears came to her relief. Almost as much overcome as she was, I walked away, leaving her still looking wishfully at the grave.

Once more I say, go to the churchyard—

“Look round upon the scene of death,
And take a word of warning:

Improve the light, nor leave till night
The business of the morning.

“The fool, through every passing hour,
Beset with sin and sorrow,
Puts far away his dying day,
Though that may be to-morrow.

“The wise man does not waste his time,
Lest life and health forsake him ;
Where'er he goes, full well he knows
That death will soon o'ertake him.

“O wouldst thou from the graves around
A useful lesson borrow,
Go on thy way, improve to-day,
And bless'd shall be to-morrow.”

ON PREPARATION FOR WINTER.

I HAVE already spoken to you about the rapid flight of time, and I now ask you, Are you prepared for bleak-blowing, finger-pinching frame-searching December? I said truly, “We can neither beg, borrow, nor steal an instant of time; therefore, make ducks and drakes of your silver and gold, and cast your jewels and your pearls, if you have them, to the very swine to trample on, rather than

part with, or misuse, a moment of that time which is more costly than the ransom of a king."

We are much more disposed to receive most things than to give them away ; but this is not the case with regard to advice. Were I required rigidly to account for the moments of the bygone twelve months, it would be seen but too plainly that I myself required, this year, the sapient admonitions which, last year, I offered to others. Are you prepared for winter ?

You remember the grasshopper in the fable : gay and light-hearted, he danced through the summer season without even so much as thinking of winter ; but, though he never thought of it, winter came ; and not having made preparation for it, he was driven to his wit's end.

Half-starved with cold and hunger, he found his way to an ant's nest, where corn had been stored up in abundance. The ants had not only thought of winter, but also prepared for its approach : not a grain, however, of their store did they offer to the pinched and perishing grasshopper. " Tell me," said one of the industrious tribe, how you have spent your time, that you have no provision now : " and when he heard of the free-hearted revelry and junketting of the poor, thoughtless grasshopper, his only remark was, " They who dance away summer, must be content to starve away winter."

Now, though I have referred to a fable, there was not the least necessity for it ; for there are so

many half-starved, homeless, and friendless grasshoppers among mankind, who have made no provision for winter, that I might just as well have referred to them as to the other.

Again I say, Are you prepared for winter? I hardly need tell you that there is a winter of life, as well as a winter of the seasons; and, if it be at all expedient to provide for the one, it is a thousand times more necessary to prepare for the other.

In the common-place occurrences of life, the want of preparation is a source of continual annoyance; and, no doubt, your experience confirms the remark.

I dare say in the course of your lives, you have been overtaken by a storm when unprepared to meet it. Oh, the comfort of a stout, thick-soled pair of boots, a substantial great-coat, and a strong umbrella when you are plodding through a puddle, and the rain is descending in torrents around you!

Stepping on the toe of a thin-soled shoe, buttoning a flimsy coat up to the chin, and tying a handkerchief over your hat, are but sorry expedients in a drenching storm. How shall I persuade you to prepare for the storm of storms—the winter of winters—the latter end of time, and the beginning of eternity!

In my youthful days, I was once so elated with the prospect of riding on horseback to a town about a dozen miles distant, that I made no preparation for the turnpike gate; the want of a penny brought

upon me a pound's worth of anguish ; bitterly did I rue my thoughtless improvidence. This, however, was but a temporary inconvenience : but, how will it be with us if, unprovided and unprepared, we think to enter the "strait gate which leadeth unto life ?"

On another occasion, at eventide, I thoughtlessly mounted a stage-coach to ride a hundred miles, without making preparation for the pinching frost, and piercing midnight winds that awaited me. I was warm when I commenced my journey, but cold enough before it was concluded. It was a cruel night: the guard of another stage, with all his thick coats and heavy capes, was found frozen to death on his seat, when the coach stopped to change horses ; and, when I descended to the frosty ground, my legs were stiffened, and almost past sensation, to my knees. I was not prepared for what I had to endure. There may be a bleaker journey in store for me : at all events, it behoves me to prepare.

I once heard a devout and highly-esteemed minister of the gospel, preach a sermon, and an excellent sermon too, from the words, " Deliver them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage." Some time after, an accident occurred in which his life was placed in the most imminent peril ; and then I heard him declare from the same pulpit in the most solemn manner, and with apparent heartfelt humility, that in that awful

moment he found that he "was not ready." For thirty years and more, he had been warning others for death, and preparing them for its approach, but, for all that, he "was not ready." I revered him the more for the humility of mind and integrity of spirit with which he made the avowal. Since then he has been called to his heavenly inheritance. I hope he was found ready, and that the lamp of God's sustaining promises burnt brightly in the dark valley through which he passed to the golden gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. But how is it with you and me? Let us ponder the question in our hearts.

Careless as we may be in seasons of health, when it pleases God, in his providence, to take us, and shake us by sickness and affliction, we are as the deaf whose ears are unstopped, and as the blind whose eyes are suddenly opened. We hear sounds and we see signs that we have hitherto disregarded. The fading leaf and the withered flower, the furrowed brow and the grey hair tell us the same tale, and bid us prepare for our latter end. Then, every returning season, every opened grave, every Sabbath bell, and every setting Sun, cries aloud to us, with a mighty voice, like the angel which stood upon "the sea and upon the earth, lifting up his hand to heaven, and swearing by Him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer."

Could all the lessons of wisdom, and all the admonitions of time, be embodied in one sentence, it would be, "Prepare for eternity!"

Many are there, who, at the approach of winter make preparations for banqueting and revelry, who are perfectly regardless of the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of dissolution. Where our next Christmas day may yet be spent we cannot tell; it may be at the festive board, or it may be above the stars. Few indeed are there in this world who keep their accounts so well balanced as to be ready to leave at a moment's warning.

You and I should indulge in such considerations as these; for it may be that our earthly pilgrimage may be drawing to a close—that the sands in our glasses may be few. Surely we have arrangements to make, debts to pay, injuries to forgive, friendships to acknowledge, and affections to manifest: and then, too, to make an entire surrender of ourselves, and all we possess, to the Father of mercies, beseeching him that, for Christ's sake, our sins may be blotted out, and that the fear of temporal death may be swallowed up in the confidence of eternal life. For the last time, again I say, Prepare!

THE END.













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